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THE PRACTICAL BASIS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF

AN ESSAY IN RECONSTRUCTION

BY

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PREFACE

THE coming on of old age warns me that it is time for me to set down in final form the conception of Christian belief to which I have been led by the studies and experience of many years. Throughout a not unlaborious life, during which my chief and professional occupation has been the study and teaching of archæology, there has always been running an independent sub-current of religious thought which I could not escape. The germs of it are to be found in papers written but not published soon after the completion of my University course in 1870. Since then, my studies have appeared in several published works,[1] as well as in many papers in *The Hibbert Journal*, *The Modern Churchman*, and elsewhere.

In these works I have endeavoured, working as a layman and a free-lance, to set forth the modifications in the basis and the expression of

[1] It may be convenient here to give a list of these :— *Exploratio Evangelica*, 1899, 2nd ed., 1907 ; *Historic View of the New Testament*, 1901 ; *The Growth of Christianity*, 1907 ; *Modernity and the Churches*, 1909 ; *The Religious Experience of St Paul*, 1913 ; *The Ephesian Gospel*, 1915 ; *Evolution in Christian Doctrine*, 1918 ; *Evolution in Christian Ethics*, 1918.

Christian belief which seem to me to be necessitated by recent tendencies of thought. These tendencies seem to be mainly four: (1) The spread of the doctrine of relativity over a wider and wider field; (2) the progress of religious psychology; (3) the comparative study of religions; (4) the change in our views of Early Christian history. It is clear that I cannot profess to be an adept in all these fields. Perhaps no one can make such a claim. But I may venture, without presumption, to state freely any observations and views which occur to me. How far they are true is for others to judge. Anyone who writes from the relativist point of view will always realise that, however well grounded may be his theories, there must necessarily be in them much of the personal element. If this be borne in mind the charge of presumption cannot be brought against him.

It must be stated emphatically that none of my colleagues, of the Churchmen's Union or any other society, can be made responsible for my views, unless hereafter they express agreement with them.

(1) The philosophic doctrine of relativity, introduced into modern philosophy by Descartes, and carried further by Hume and Kant, has cut the ground away from under older systems of dogmatic or absolute theology. It has been at the basis of recent scientific construction, and

now apparently it has received from Einstein mathematical demonstration, though this is a subject on which I do not venture to pronounce: such, however, is the contention of Lord Haldane in his *Reign of Relativity*.

It has been maintained by Roman Catholic authorities, and it has been declared in recent works, such as those of Ehrhard in Germany and Dr Harris in England, that the critical philosophy of Kant is, if accepted, fatal to all Christian belief. But Kant himself saw that his views needed supplementing and guarding, and in his *Critique of the Practical Reason* tried to relay the foundations of belief, not on the intellectual but on the active powers of man.

It was natural that, starting in 1870, I should have worked on a Kantian basis. The Kantian *Critique of Pure Reason* seemed to me logically unanswerable. But it was supplemented by the *Critique of the Practical Reason*, which offered a way, perhaps not altogether consistent, but on the whole satisfactory, for escaping from scepticism and subjectivity into energy and freedom. The *Critique of the Practical Reason* is the forerunner of the pragmatist and activist schemes of thought and ethics, which have grown with such vigour in recent years—the schemes of James and Bergson and Croce and others. Thus though I do not find it necessary to retract the argument of the early chapters of the *Exploratio*, I now

think it sufficient to take a start from the practical faculties of mankind, and to leave the question of the abstract possibility of knowledge and experience to professed metaphysicians.

The principle of relativity is by no means opposed to the belief in reality; but it does stand in opposition to the metaphysical notion of the absolute. This term indeed is used in many senses; so many that I think it best avoided. It is much better to speak of the divine transcendence than of the absolute Deity, because this latter phrase has been so much used as a counter in metaphysical discussion that many writers regard it as valuable coin. It is better to speak on grounds of experience of a Deity partly hidden and partly revealed, than on logical grounds of an absolute Being, about whom it is easy to say more than one can possibly know.

(2) Parallel to the drift in philosophy in the direction of relativity is the drift in psychology; recent works in which subject, leaving the introspective analysis of the intellectual powers, have maintained that the instincts and impulses are the more fundamental and essential part of man; and that intellect, however noble and important, is a side of human nature later in origin and far inferior in driving power. So far as I am acquainted with the works of Freud and Jung and their followers, I find in them much

that is repellent, but also much of permanent interest. Their root principles seem to me of value, but they lay an unnecessary stress on unhealthy and abnormal phases of mentality. Their religious views I find intolerable. But such works as James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* and M'Dougall's *Social Psychology* are of extraordinary value.

(3) There has arisen out of anthropological research a new science, the science of comparative religion. And it is beyond question that the way of comparing one religion with another, and tracing definite tendencies in one after another, has made us regard religious belief in quite a fresh light. It need not make any Christian less confident in the truth of his own beliefs, and it offers a new and experimental basis for most of the essential beliefs of the Christian Church; but it is a foe to the intolerant exclusiveness which occupies in the history of belief a place parallel to that occupied by the notion of the absolute in metaphysical philosophy.

(4) The historic roots of Christianity lie in those fields of ancient history to which immense attention has been paid by savants since the Renaissance. By continual working, and through ever fresh discoveries, scholars have gradually developed comparative and critical methods, which have entirely altered our ways of regarding the ages in which Greece and Rome were pre-

dominant. By an inevitable tendency, these same methods have been applied to the early history and to the sacred books of Christianity, with notable and far-reaching results. The faults of excessive scepticism and of love of system, common in academic circles, have led some eminent critics to views which are unbalanced and fanciful. Such writers as Schweitzer and Schmiedel, not to mention the most extreme, have certainly allowed a pedantic love of symmetry and system to lead them beyond the bounds of moderation. At present, such excesses have caused a certain amount of conservative reaction. But the tendency works steadily, and is not likely to meet any but temporary set-backs.

It is frequently said by Christian apologists that the conflict between science and Christianity is at an end. There is a certain amount of truth in this statement. The old crude antagonism between Genesis and geology, and generally the tendency of the men of physical science to despise the Bible and the Church, is in our day far less acute. But no one who had adequate knowledge would venture to say that the growing science of psychology, the science of comparative religion, and the progress of historic criticism, have not an important bearing on religious belief. They are in the highest degree destructive of that complacent convention in Christian belief which fancies itself orthodox, being really very far from

the orthodoxy of early Christianity. There is an urgent need of reconstruction of belief on a new and more trustworthy basis. This is the object to which the present work is a modest contribution.

Such attempts at reconstruction are as far as possible removed from merely rationalist and destructive criticism. Modern psychology has fully justified many of the instincts and feelings which rationalism regarded as superstitious. Modern historic criticism, while diminishing the supernatural and abnormal element in early Christianity, has in fact tended to bring out its pure lustre. A great part, if not the whole, of Christian doctrine turns out to be based upon fundamental facts in the nature of man and the spiritual world. That is the conviction with which I have always written, and the conviction becomes stronger as I grow old.

It is obvious that, writing in so brief and summary a way, I am obliged to be dogmatic, to state views without fully establishing them, and still more, without replying to the many objections which will occur to readers. I think there are few of these objections which I have not considered and tried to meet in previous volumes. Those who do not grant my premisses will naturally reject the views based on them. Yet I think that, although many points in them may have to be altered as knowledge and science grow, at least the type of them will persist, and

I also think that such a basis as I here attempt to lay down will serve for many types of Christian belief, Catholic, Protestant, or even Quaker.

That this hope is not chimerical seems to be indicated by a test. Recently six excellent addresses on "Religion and Life" have been given at Oxford by noted speakers, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Lay. I do not suppose that these theologians would generally accept the views of this book. But I think that any one of the six might adopt them without having to alter his address in any important particular.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

CHRISTIAN BELIEF

I

All religions try to shorten the distance between man and God. The Psalms, 1. Yet the way hard, 2. Some mediator necessary, 3. The prophets and the Son, 3. The Church and personal approach, 4. In the Synoptics the Spirit spoken of as leading men to God, 4. So in the early history in Acts, 5. But St Paul speaks rather of the life in Christ, 5. His teaching practical, and neglecting doctrinal elements, 6. The Fourth Evangelist speaks both of the Spirit and of Christ, 6. Paul has a scheme of soteriology, the Evangelist of theology, 7. The latter brings in Hellenic elements, 7. Hence a Creed, which did not exist among the Jews, 8. At present the speculative philosophy which produced it is largely out of date, 9. Yet the Creeds persist, 10. The laity frankly do not understand them, 10. But right thinking in matters of religion of the greatest importance, 11.

II

The grounds of Christianity must be investigated in all fields, natural science, psychology, and history, 12. The first of these of less direct importance, though doctrines of evolution and relativity pertinent, 13. The growth of the historic spirit, 13. History treated of more fully in *Exploratio Evangelica*, 14. The most important to our purpose are recent discoveries in psychology, affecting medicine, education, and especially religion, 14. Need for complete revision of the creeds, 15. Tradition must be questioned, and the facts of experience fully considered, 16.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF PERSONALITY

I

Difficulty of the subject, when we pass behind the obvious, 20. The active and conative faculties in man primary, 21. Sketch of the psychology of knowledge from this point of view, 21. The world discovered through its resistances, 22; also ourselves, both body and soul, 23.

II

Our primary instincts according to M'Dougall, 24. We may further analyse them, 25. Comparison of the human spirit to a particle of radium, 26. But they differ because the former has a power of self-determination, 27. Possibly a man can act outside his physical frame, 28; but certainly his mind can so act, by suggestion and telepathy, 29. We naturally think of ourselves as self-contained units, but this is largely illusion, 29. The inner predominant over the outer, 30. Man a centre of force, 31. Extension of the idea of personality to groups and states, 32. In quiet times individualism dominant: less so in stormy times, 33. The surface of consciousness covers much illusion, 34.

CHAPTER III

PERSONALITY AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

The human spirit in contact with a flow of life and energy, which may lead to good, 35.

I. Personality and the Unconscious

A variety of comparisons may throw light on this relation, 36. We may compare a coral island built up by living things but resting on the bottom of the ocean, 37. Or a floating iceberg which turns over, and shows a new facet, 38. Or a narrow inlet of the sea which has individuality, but is connected with the continuous ocean, 39. The will of man like a sluice-gate, 38. The term unconscious only implies not entering into our individual consciousness, 39. Man's business is to modify the visible world by means of ideas taken from the invisible, 39. The above analogies suggest that every deed of man tends to modify the general unconscious, 40. At present I use vague terms which will become clear later, 41.

II. The Sub-conscious and the Super-conscious

Comparison of consciousness to the solar spectrum beyond which rays do not cause perception, 42. It has been evolved in the ages, 43. Phenomena of hypnotism, and of spiritism, an unalluring but necessary subject of study, 45. Most of the ordinary phenomena of spiritism are not above but below the level of conscious life: they are usual among savages, but are later outgrown, 48. Among these are usually trance and ecstasy, though sometimes these are vehicles of the higher, 49. Genius not only shown in the sub-conscious, 50. A fine human personality is really the highest thing, 51. Spiritism as usually practised lowers it, 52. The communications take their tone from the surrounding atmosphere, and are not lofty in character, 53. There is little of ethical idea or on the level of the best human intelligence, 54. It is sometimes maintained, however, that their low average level makes them more credible, 55.

III. The Conscious and Unconscious in Religion

A relief to turn to conscious humanity, 56. Primacy in the life of will, the wills of men and that of God, 57. This the primal teaching of the Gospels, which has with time taken stronger hold, 59.

IV

Three stages in religion: (1) When it is concerned with the sub-conscious, *i.e.* barbaric or pagan, 61. This necessarily decays as man becomes civilised, 62. (2) When concerned with the conscious, notably Greek philosophic theism, 63. (3) When concerned with the super-conscious, as the best religion of Judæa, and Christianity, which inculcates harmony of will between God and man, produced by prayer, 64.

CHAPTER IV

THE CLAIMS OF SPIRIT

I

The better teaching is that the inner spiritual world is higher than the visible, 67. So Plato, Kant, and others: and so Christianity, 67. From the resistances of physical surroundings we learn natural law, 68. Parallel is the discovery of spiritual law, 68. In the Middle Ages men regarded knowledge of it as derived only from revelation in books or a society, 68. But inspiration takes form and colour from the intellectual conditions of the time, 69. At bottom the matter is one of experience: the venture of faith and divine aid, 70.

II

The difficulty lies in the interpretation of such aid, 71. Paths to union with the divine, 72. The way of asceticism in East and West, 72. Some truth in it, as proved by history, 73. The way of practical philanthropy, 75. This has come much into the foreground, 75. The way of intellectual sympathy, 76. The devotee of science, 77. The way of art, 77.

III

The constant hopefulness of nature, 79. The chief duty of man to take a place in the spiritual world and its embodiments in time and place, 80. We have also to consider the point of view of the individual, as men naturally desire happiness, 81. But true happiness comes from conformity to the law of one's being, even among animals, 82. It is not dependent on outward prosperity, but comes from within, 82. Self-subordination to the happiness of others, 83.

CHAPTER V

INSPIRATION AND REVELATION

I

Inspiration and revelation two sides of the same fact, 84. This fact a special feature of the Jewish race; absent in Greece, 85. The psychology of inspiration, 86. Dreams not of the first importance, 87: rather any times of quiet and passivity, 87. Such times rare in modern life, 88. W. James and the uprush of the unconscious, 88. The Jewish prophets primarily preachers of righteousness, 89. They taught at first that righteousness led to happiness in the individual, 89. Later, they spoke of a future realm of happiness for the nation, 90. The root of inspiration divine; its expression in words defective, owing especially to a poverty of intellectual outlook, 91. Attempt to foretell future events a failure, 92. Doctrine of infallibility of Scripture, taken over by Christianity, 93. Inspiration not confined to the unconscious, 94.

II

Difficulty of separating inspiration from its imperfect expression, 95. Belief in it based rather on emotion and experience than on reason, 95. What is meant by infallibility, 96. Difficulty in testing inspiration, 96. French Modernists confine it to dogma, and except from it history, 97. This rejected by Rome, 97. In the Middle Ages, the world of nature was contrasted with the world of grace, 98. A

modern rendering of this distinction would lie in contrasting what may be called the oxygenic element in life, the realm of impulse and initiative, and the nitrogenic element, the course of the world, 98. The frontier between the two runs through personality, 100.

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I

Ethics may be treated in a static or a dynamic way: the latter way is ours, 101. Religion represents the doing of God's will as the way of goodness, 102. The subject of the divine will may be approached on the intellectual, the emotional, or the active side, 103. On the intellectual side we have moral philosophy, which has of late developed in the direction of Utilitarianism, 105. The result has been a tendency towards overvaluing the obvious and the material, 106. Christianity contrasted with Utilitarianism because it asserts the inherent difference between good and evil, 109. Authority in religion, less conspicuous in Christianity than in Islam: hence the former can progress, 110.

II

Christ used natural analogies to show the nature of the spiritual life, 112. We may, with the growth of natural and historic knowledge, extend them, 113. The Jewish code of ethics accepted by Jesus, but made elastic, 115. Ethics by him based on the love of God and man, 115. Hence mere attention to the surroundings of life insufficient, 116. Christian ethics based on facts of psychology: it takes the activist view of life, 117. Not all deeds done with good motive good, 118. But accord with the divine will implies a complete conversion of heart, 119.

CHAPTER VII

THE DIVINE FATHER

I. God and Human Personality

God as transcendent, and the source of all things, 120. Myths of creation, 121. God as immanent, in contact with the spirit of man, 121. Man no parasite, but a giver as well as a receiver, 122. Thus a partnership in conduct, 123. Hence great value of personality, which expands by contact with God, 124. This the essence of the Christian faith, 124.

II. Jewish and Greek Conceptions of God

The Jewish Jehovah, originally tribal, 125. God in Plato and the Stoics, 125. The Jews thought of God as personal, the Greeks usually as impersonal, 126. In the Gospels, no speculation as to the nature of God, 127. Early Christianity baptizes into Christ the Jewish and the Greek theism, 127.

III. God's Power, Holiness, and Love

An absolute Deity passes our comprehension, 128. As known to us God wields all power except that cut off by human wills, 129. God the source even of human power and goodness, 130. So the Old Testament, 130. But God's power best seen in the working of ideals, 132. We become conscious of a higher will, into which we cannot be wholly absorbed, 132. Objection that the phrase "will of God" is anthropomorphic —not valid, 132. Action and reaction between man and God, 132. The notions of fatherhood of God and of brotherhood of man, 133. Without the former, the latter impotent, 133. God no weak or indulgent parent, 134. Nor does he intervene by cataclysms, 135. The current notions of God greatly need stiffening: the divine righteousness often obscured, 136. Yet it may be traced everywhere in history and in present social conditions, 137. Sin anti-social and self-destructive, 139. The physical world a place not of capricious interference but of law and order, 139. So is the world of human action and morals, 140.

IV. God in History

Divine help in the past, especially of England, 141. The love of God a stream of influence which does not affect all men and nations equally, but some more than others, 142. The Jews and the Greeks; so in regard to individuals also, 143. The goodness of God in the forgiveness of sin, 144. Nature implacable; but divine overruling, 144.

V. The Divine Personality

A naïve conception of God's personality untenable, 145. Its meaning not abstract, but relative and practical, 146. A priori arguments out of place, 146. Argument from experience; especially from the experience of prayer, 147. Close likeness to our relation to fellow-men, 147. Hence it is natural to think of God also as personal, 148. But this is only in a degree legitimate, 149. Analogy of wireless telegraphy, 149. Intellectual difficulties in relation to divine personality induce men to crave mediators, 150. Experience in the same way reveals diabolic personalities, 151. This doctrine generally unpleasing; so men find substitutes, 151. But the experience they cannot set aside, 152.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ETERNAL CHRIST

I. The Person of Christ in the Gospels

The questions in regard to Christ the most important to Christians, 153. We have to collate the historic picture of Jesus and the vision of the exalted Christ, 154. We must give up the random citing of texts from various books of the Bible, and instead apply to the Gospels the methods derived from criticism of Greek and Roman authors, 155. We must distinguish, in the first place, between the teaching of Jesus as to himself, and the views of the disciples, 156. The Fourth Gospel and the Pauline Epistles belong to the second class, 156. The teaching of Jesus as to himself is of a purely practical, not a speculative character, 158. He does not explain his relation to God, 159. He spoke of a coming end of the world, and seems to have thought of himself as chief actor, 160. But in the Gospels what is primary is not this but a new sense of spiritual values, 161. The roots of the teaching go into the whole spiritual ground of life, 162. Thus it survived the decay of the eschatological beliefs, 162. The miraculous element in the life not of the greatest importance, 162. Dr Sanday's view that the seat of the divine in Jesus was in the unconscious is only part of the truth, 163.

II. The Person of Christ among the Early Disciples

After the Crucifixion the disciples persuaded of the continued presence of their Master, 164. In explaining this, they produced theories as to his nature, 165. Matthew and Luke held a monadic view, and do not speak of pre-existence, 165. Paul regards his Master as a great spiritual Power, pre-existent, and at death restored to heaven, 166. The Fourth Evangelist speaks of the ideal Christ sojourning among men; and holds that his person was superhuman, 166. He maintains that the Jews continually misunderstood his teaching by taking it in a material sense, 167. Even the second coming he spiritualises, 168. His Jesus calls himself the Son of God because consecrated by God, 169. In one place he speaks of him as the incarnate word or reason of God, 169. In the last chapters he speaks both of Christ as coming again and of the Holy Spirit as coming to carry on his work, 170. Paul is convinced that the life of Christ caused a new orientation in the world of spirit, 170. The writer of Hebrews speaks of Christ as Mediator and High

Priest, 171 : later writers as partaking of the Godhead, whence the doctrine of the Trinity, 173. All these attempts based on the continued inspiration of the Church, 173.

III. Christ in History and Experience

We have to consider how the doctrine of Christ and the Church is related to modern experience, 173. The hyphen between Jesus and Christ : an abyss to be overleaped by faith or explained by fact, 174. The historic fact is the change in the relations of God to man dating from the life of Jesus, 175. The rise of the Church a fact without parallel, a crisis repeated in the lives of Christians, 175. But it is really a continuation of the life of the Founder, 175. That inspiration has never wholly died down, 176. In this no rejection of historic methods, since history shows periods of crisis and climax, *e.g.* the sixth century B.C. and the sixteenth A.D., 179. Such periods really led up to by events, 179. But the appeal to history not conclusive apart from experience which explains it, 180. The eternal Christ revealed in the historic Jesus, 182. Jesus-worship natural and innocent, but is undermined by criticism, though the historic Jesus unique, 183. In the Synoptists traces of humanity obvious : but the Spirit of God behind the humanity, 184.

IV. The Eternal Christ

Gradual revelation to men of the eternal Christ, carried on by the Church, 185. The movement " back to Jesus " justified, but the object of the Church's worship really the eternal Christ, 186. To divide the life of Christ, and interpolate a human period, is making time a condition of the eternal, 187. It gives us what may be termed Arian views, 187. Rather we should regard the human Jesus as a revelation in space and time of the eternal Christ, the human side of God, 186. The conditions temporary ; the knowledge imperfect ; but the will on the side of God, 188. The nature of Christ's divinity the matter of incessant speculation in Greek circles : to moderns the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement more important, 189. These have a meaning for all time, but the literal or Pauline view overthrown by criticism, 189. They are processes carried on by the Church, 191. It is only the divine, however incarnate, which should be the object of worship, 192. The facts of history and experience on which Christologies are based are perpetual, but the rendering of those Christologies in words can only be temporary, 193. Nevertheless, creeds have great value and use, so long as they are regarded rather as historic documents than as infallible, 196.

CHAPTER IX

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The beliefs of the Church dominated by Greek metaphysics ; but may have a basis in experience, 199. Alternative doctrines of the Eternal Christ and the Holy Spirit, 200. The latter arose among the Jews, and was accepted by Christianity, 200. Records of the descent of the Spirit hardly historic, 201. In the Gospels the doctrine dwelt on by Christ himself, 201. Early Christianity confines it to the Society, 202. But imparted to individual members, 203. In the Jewish Scriptures every good gift regarded as given by the Spirit of God, including bodily prowess, 203. Darwin at one time accepted this, but later gave it up, 205. The Spirit works in the unconscious in man ; as does also the Spirit of evil, 207. Difficulty of discriminating, 207. Tests suggested in the *Didachê*, 208. The emotions belong to the unconscious and so are especially liable to influence of Spirit, 209. Results sometimes abnormal. But the Spirit works also in conscious thought and will : so the Jewish prophets, 210. The Jews regarded wisdom as a special gift of the Spirit, *i.e.* a sane view of realities, 211. This notable in many Christian saints, 212. The Spirit acts in two ways—by inculcating love of truth, and helping in the suppression of personal prejudice, 213. St Paul teaches that the intellect is open to divine inspiration, 214. This tradition continued in the Church ; examples Clement and Augustine, 214. This point of view much eclipsed in modern times, 215. The need of intelligence divinely directed great among us, especially in social matters, 217. We have to translate into modern conditions the impulses of early Christianity. Unregulated emotion may produce fatal aberrations, 217. St Paul sometimes depreciates what he calls mundane wisdom, because he felt that it needed baptism into Christ, 219. With Christianity came a great spiritual crisis : hence the working of the Spirit in all spheres greatly changed, 220. The question of the personality of the Holy Spirit, 223. The dogma of the Trinity a scholastic summary of doctrines in themselves valuable. Jeremy Taylor, 224.

CHAPTER X

PERSONAL IMMORTALITY AND ETERNAL LIFE

I. Primitive Views

We know what becomes of the body at death, 225. The crux is the survival of personality, as to which men feel strongly, 226.

According to primitive religion, man continued his ordinary life in a ghostly state, 227. The wizard or witch was in touch with the departed, 228. When such beliefs died down, their place was taken by spiritism, 228. Thought transference is proved, and that mediums have access to mines of knowledge of doubtful origin, 228. Spiritism accepts the monadic view, that after death men survive with their present traits unchanged, 228. But in fact mediums differ as to the source of their knowledge, whether the departed, or earth-spirits, or demons, 229. All lofty religions have made war on witchcraft, 230. Personal survival is hard to imagine without continued memory, and without a body of some kind, 230. For the notion of a non-material body, India substitutes rebirth in other lives, human or animal, 231.

II. Modern Popular Views

The result of the war has been to revive primitive conceptions, 232. The Roman Church believes in purgatory, 232. Protestants often believe in heaven and hell as alternatives: but usually the latter is put out of sight, with great inconsistency, 233. No one has been able to suggest any kind of individual future life which would not in time become intolerable, 234. Many people think little on the subject, 235.

III. Earliest Christian Views

Christians greatly value reported sayings of the Saviour, 236. One of these, as to the woman who had seven husbands, and then died, bears on the present subject, 237. Transitory in it is the expectation of a coming catastrophe, 238. Perpetual meaning attaches to the saying, "They marry not, nor are given in marriage." Also to the saying, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," 239.

IV. Philosophic Views

Analogies from the life of nature, 240. Seeds; the caddis-fly, 240. Sleep and anæsthetics, 241. The argument from the moral nature: imperfect equation of goodness and happiness in the world, 242. The activist point of view, 243. Belief in a future life based not on argument, but on an inner urging, 244. It has tended to the moralisation and energy of life, 245. Objections of modern materialism, 247. The matter must be fought out in life, 247. The belief has an ultimate basis in the sense of values. Sub-conscious respect for it, 248 But on the whole philosophy agnostic. Need of a self-surrender to the divine will, 250.

V. Eternal Life

Another way of immortality shown by Christian mysticism, 251. Thus in the Fourth Gospel we have the saying, "If a man keep my word, he shall never see death." Eternal life not mere continued existence, 252. It is a merging of self in a higher life, 253. This state has been almost attained by some. St Paul speaks of life in the spirit as eternal, 253. And the Fourth Evangelist speaks of eternal life as the result of knowledge of God and communion with him, 254. Whereas continued existence is only a matter of faith, eternal life may be a matter of experience, on which is built confidence in the future, 255. The approach to the divine a gradual process: the ideas of God slowly mould the world, 256. The Christian Church carries on the life of Christ. Such questions as the possible failure of life on our globe need not distress us in view of infinite possibilities of spirit, 257.

CHAPTER XI

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

I. The Collective Consciousness of the Church

The question of the subordination of the individual to the Society, 259. Modern views of a group-mind, which is more than the minds of individuals, 260. But it exists only in organised societies, such as nations, societies, and Churches, 261. The Jewish theocracy and its parallels, 263. The rise of voluntary societies in the decay of the states, 264. These were attached to deities whom the Christians held to be evil spirits, 264. St Paul sometimes speaks thus, but sometimes holds with the Jews that they were nonentities, 266. Difficult to estimate the moral value of such cults as Mithraism, 267. Christianity like these societies in being attached to an unseen ruler and in having sacred books and rites, 268. The inspiration of Christianity gradually took form in creed, ritual, and organisation, 269. See *Exploratio Evangelica*. The Church thus regarded is an unity, though at present an invisible unity, 273.

II. The Communion of Saints

The Church includes departed members. A natural tendency to invoke their aid, 274. This is certainly not a mere perversion, 275. The Saints of Catholicism, historically investigated, prove unsatisfactory, especially because miracles were required for canonisation, 276. Abuses of relic-worship, 277. Also the virtues looked for in saints were not really the

highest, 278. Auguste Comte's attempt at a new hagiology, 279. Psychologically, saint-worship has often been an aid to religion, 279. The votaries appeal to experience, and they are justified so long as they do not go outside experience, 280. But when we apply tests they usually fail. There is first the test of history, which is very destructive; then the test of fruits, on which the common sense of man insists, 282. The Church carries on the life and obedience of Christ, 283. If communion with saints is communion, not with their past life, but with the divine in them, it may be justified, 284. The influence of the good passes on in many ways to their successors, 285. The Christian eucharist is really an act of union not only with God and Christ, but with all Christians, living and dead, 286.

PRACTICAL BASIS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF

CHAPTER I

CHRISTIAN BELIEF

I

All the great religions of the world, and all the great religious teachers of the world, have set before themselves the object of shortening the distance between God and man, of showing ways in which man can learn to know and to love God, and to do the will of God in the world. They maintain that it is possible for man to come into the presence of God and to feel in his heart the working of Divine power. There is no litany of approach to God so great and admirable as the Hebrew Psalms; and by inspired wisdom the Christian Church has from the first made them a prominent feature of her daily services. Such Psalms as the 22nd, the 42nd, the 139th, must always remain the most intimate utterances of the religious spirit. The Founder of Christianity teaches emphatically that God is not only ready to allow the approaches of man, but that God is

anxious to meet man, cares for him with a Father's care, and rejoices when he turns from evil ways to seek the face of God.

But though Christianity teaches that the way from man to God is open, yet it declares that for all except a few happily constituted souls it is not easy. There are all sorts of hindrances in the way, from the attraction of the obvious, the weakness of human nature, the deep tendencies to evil which torment all men and often master nearly all. Jesus taught that the gate into the way of life was narrow, and the way itself hard to walk in. St Paul represents life as a long struggle, wherein the approach to God is hindered by a thousand temptations and troubles. The Fourth Evangelist speaks of faith in God as appealing to the children of the light, and yet being ever thwarted and eclipsed by surrounding darkness and evil.

Hence the great object of religion is to make easier the approach to God, to set forth some way by following which man may approach his Maker, to point to a mediator between God and man, who is inspired from above, and yet is easier of approach than the Most High. The more a man is given to intellectual contemplation and spiritual search for the divine, the more lofty and sublime appears the being of God. And in the daily strivings and sufferings of men, in the daily struggle between good and evil, they

need the aid of something nearer and more accessible than the ultimate deity of whom they feel, with the Psalmist, and with the author of Job, that he is high and inscrutable. They repeat the words: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

But God in many ways has condescended to man. At intervals in history he has sent prophets and inspired teachers to make the way towards himself easier. Both in the ancient and the modern world he has thrown out lines of communication to which men can attach themselves. And in Jesus Christ he has made to men a supreme revelation of himself. As the writer to the Hebrews says, God who in past times spoke by the prophets of Israel (and we may add by the philosophers of Greece), finally spoke to men by his Son, and made permanent in the world the results of the message sent through him. That message has been growing ever since. Ever since, fresh sides of the original inspiration of Christianity have been coming to light, fresh communications on the way opened by the life of Jesus Christ have been coming into the world.

There have been working side by side the material and the spiritual sides of revelation. The Church, with its fixed ordinances, its rites and sacraments, has kept up a visible road to

God; and the mass of mankind have in all ages gained thereby help and energy. The spiritual road has been travelled by the few, the more contemplative natures, who have found, not only, or even chiefly, in Church ordinances the influence of the Divine Spirit, but have attained to a spiritual communion with such revelations or emanations of God as have come within their horizon.

In the Christian religion as set forth in the New Testament the incarnation or the revelation of God in Christ is set forth in two ways. In the Synoptic Gospels generally God is spoken of as drawing near to men by giving to men the Divine Spirit. "How much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." By the Spirit, God awakens enthusiasm in men; by the Spirit he bestows on them courage and wisdom and the love of what is good. The same line is carried on in the early chapters of Acts; but the writer of Acts, who attaches great value to the physical phenomena which accompanied the preaching of the Word, loves to dwell on the abnormal phenomena which usually accompany the preaching of a religious revival, ecstatic utterances, faith healing, and the like. These especially he records as the results of the bestowal on men of the Divine Spirit. And as he is our only source for the earliest history of the Church, readers of the

New Testament are apt to let these obvious phenomena figure too prominently in their minds. St Paul in his letters, with eminent balance of mind and sanity, introduces into the picture a better perspective; and though he does not disapprove of speaking with tongues and wonders of healing, puts far before and above them the higher gifts of the Spirit, wisdom, faith, brotherly love.

But St Paul often speaks in another way of the higher manifestations of the Spirit, regarding them as the fruit of the life of Christ in the heart of the disciple. For him Christ is united with each of his followers so intimately that the whole Church or body of believers is one in the mystic personality of Christ. He speaks of believers as dead to the world, and made alive by an inward power flowing into them from the exalted Christ. He goes so far as to say, in his own case, that he has ceased to be, and that Christ lives in his mortal body.

St Paul does not draw any distinction which can be formulated between God and the Spirit of God, Christ and the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. His mind is not at all metaphysical, but in the highest degree practical; and in speaking of spiritual experience he throws his description of it sometimes into one form and sometimes into another, without caring whether these various ways of expression

are self-consistent or not. In the language of Matthew Arnold, he writes in a literary way, and those who try to take his utterances as science, and to construct with them an arch of dogma, are completely baffled. He knew that his inspiration came from God; he knew that it was a continuation of the inspiration of the great prophets of Israel; and he knew that it was closely related to the life and the death of Jesus. But he had no definite scheme of theology; and phrases like those of the Athanasian Creed would have conveyed to him little meaning.

The Ephesian follower of St Paul, who wrote the Fourth Gospel, carries on both the lines of interpretation. In the wonderful discourses which occupy his last chapters, he speaks at one time of the inspiration of Christians as a result of the indwelling of Christ, returned after death to his Church; at another time he regards this same inspiration as the fruit of the inward working of the Divine Spirit, whom Jesus Christ sends to guide, to instruct, and to encourage his followers.

St Paul has a definite scheme of soteriology, of the way in which sinners are redeemed and justified before God, a scheme which was further developed by the great doctors of the Church, by Augustine, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, and the great reformers of the sixteenth century. But

he has no scheme of theology, of the doctrine of the being and attributes of God. The Fourth Evangelist, on the other hand, dwells less on soteriology. But living in the Greek atmosphere of Ephesus he could not be content without some attempt at a rational theology, though he never developed it beyond the rudiments. In the first verses of his Gospel he identifies Christ with that Divine Wisdom or Reason of which thinkers in the last centuries before our era had frequently spoken. The Jews had regarded the Divine Spirit as an afflatus or breath of life, with which the spirits of inspired men were filled, and which had enabled them to work wonders in the world. But the Greeks sought for wisdom; and in the Jewish Apocrypha under their influence the Wisdom of God is the great power which ordered the world, and set it going in the paths of progress, and which breathes into good men alike virtue and sagacity. But the Logos doctrine which the evangelist states in his preface, he does not work out in the body of his Gospel: only here and there, as in the discourse to Nicodemus, he represents Jesus as imparting to men a higher wisdom. But it has sometimes occurred that a striking use of a word has modified the course of history; and so it came about in this instance. A series of Greek theologians, Justin, Origen, Athanasius, and others, starting from the phrase *logos*, worked out a scheme of theology.

And finally they formed it into a Creed, to be accepted by all Christians under pain of expulsion from the Society.

The Jewish Church never had a creed beyond the unity of God; nor has any Semitic race felt the necessity for a detailed scheme of intellectual propositions to enshrine its religion. The creed of Islam is comprised in one short sentence, which affirms the unity of God and the inspiration of Mohammed. The idea of a longer creed came from the Greeks, and not from their religious societies; neither in the religion of Olympus, nor among the mystic sects of later Greece was there anything of the kind. But the sects of philosophers who divided among them the heritage of Socrates and Plato found it necessary, in their discussions, to state exactly what views of the nature of God, mankind, and the world they stood for. So the world of thought was broken up into warring sects or cliques, and each regarded the others as living in a mist of error and delusion. And this spirit of sect passed, through the agency of Christians who had been philosophers, such as Justin and Clement of Alexandria, into the fabric of the rising Church. And so the earliest Christian Creed, which we find in the baptismal confession of the Ethiopian eunuch, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," gradually grew and developed into the great profession of belief formulated at Nicæa and Chalcedon.

In our days there are still philosophers who think that they and their friends alone have found the true and rational explanation of the universe. And so long as they are not too exclusive, there is no need to object to this. Speculative thought is natural to some minds. No doubt it will go on in the future as in the past, just as poetry will go on; and many subtle minds will find in it their highest satisfaction. The perpetual stream of Gifford Lectures shows this very clearly. And almost all thinking men will find in speculation at some time in their lives the fulfilment of a great need. But I think that modern tendencies of thought will make such speculation less usual with the strongest intelligences than it has been in the past. The system of Hegel is a sort of high-water mark, which few can pass. A study of the history of philosophy, and an attempt to map out the realm of thought is now, even if the results be very inconclusive, one of the best gymnastics of the mind. Anyone who is familiar with the results of philosophic teaching in the Scotch universities, or at Oxford and Cambridge, especially if such teaching deal largely with the works of Plato and Aristotle, will realise its great value in the training of the intelligence. But to ordinary men, the great majority of the intelligent and educated, speculative philosophy is out of court; either it does not interest them, or they regard it as a mere intel-

lectual exercise. They think that the great lights of philosophy were partly right and partly wrong; and that it is not worth the while of those who do not make a profession of philosophy to go far into the subject.

But while an easy scepticism occupies men's minds in the matter of philosophy, the organised Churches of Christendom have accepted Creeds authoritatively set forth by Councils as expressions of eternal and objective truth; and they compel, at all events, those who take active service in them to subscribe such creeds. And meantime the whole character of our intellectual surroundings has so completely changed, that no one save a professed scholar, and even professed scholars very imperfectly, can understand what was in the minds of those who drew up the Creeds, or what their clauses were intended to convey. The minds of the good Churchmen who, Sunday after Sunday, repeat these Creeds are hopelessly out of touch with their original meaning.

When an average man hears that "the Son is of one substance with the Father," knowing nothing of the elaborate metaphysical subtleties as to *substance*, he thinks primarily of some material thing; but as the memorable phrase of the Fourth Gospel, "God is Spirit," [1] comes into his mind, that mind relapses into vacuity. Yet if his neighbour refuses to repeat the phrase of the

[1] Not *a* spirit, as in the A.V.

Creed, he sets him down as a heretic, probably a Unitarian, and thanks God that himself is not such. In reality he may well be further from orthodoxy than this same neighbour. *Hymns Ancient and Modern* are full of various heresies; some of them are almost pagan. Many an English Churchman is really a ditheist. Many a Roman Catholic is a tritheist, adding the Virgin Mary to God and Christ, or even a polytheist. These men may be perfectly good Christians, and members of the spiritual body of Christ; but they have never adequately turned their intellectual faculties towards the theory of their religion.

Yet right and true thinking, in matters of religion, is important; I do not say as important as right action or right feeling, but yet important. A man should have a reason for the hope that is in him; for if he has not, he is liable at any moment to be thrust by a sudden misfortune or a wave of disbelief from his anchorage, and to drift into pessimism and despair. "He that wills to be safe, must thus think of the Trinity," is a phrase which seems to most people an intolerable piece of dogmatism. Yet in a sense it is true. Unless a man has found a view of God and eternal life which fits in with his knowledge of material things and with the duties of every day, he is certainly not in a state of safety. He may by the force of custom, or out of respect to

the opinion of his neighbours, live a virtuous life under ordinary circumstances. But how if he be suddenly thrust out of that course of life, and obliged to fall back on first principles, as so many were compelled to do in the time of the war? It becomes, therefore, important to question, on the one side the classical documents of the Christian faith, and on the other side the observed facts of religious psychology, in the endeavour to discover what are the true grounds of faith for a modern Christian.

II

If the grounds of Christianity are to be investigated, they must be investigated methodically, that is to say, scientifically. We have to investigate three fields of research; the visible material world, the nature of man, that is, psychology, and history.

(1) The investigation of nature can hardly be of primary importance to us in this connection, unless we are content with materialism, and resolved to set aside all that eludes physical tests and measurements. The philosophers of Ionia started in this direction; Democritus and Epicurus carried on their line, and it has never wanted advocates down to the days of Haeckel. Yet many of the great physical and biological discoveries of recent years have so greatly changed our outlook upon nature, that the mere

phrase of the creed that God is the creator of all things, needs unmeasured amplification and refinement. The theory of evolution, recent discovery in the analysis of matter, and, last of all, the extension of the theory of relativity to the study of nature, have greatly altered our conception of the relation of God to the world. And at every turn we find it possible to draw from the study of the world analogies which enlighten us as to the nature and action of the invisible.

(2) There were great historians in the ancient world. In their way Thucydides and Polybius have never been surpassed. Early Christianity substituted the Jewish view of history for the Greek; a remarkable retrogression; and for ages all history lost its scientific character under the influence of ethical and religious motives. Not until, within the memory of some still living, the idea of evolution was imported into historic studies, did history set out on a new and scientific career. And even now, in the minds of the great majority of people, when the history of Christianity is in question, all historic method is thrown aside, and the historic views of the first Christians are accepted as of divine inspiration. But year by year this latter attitude of mind is receding, and the more scientific treatment of the sacred books and the early history of the Christian Church is becoming more usual; at least in all places of higher education.

In the present work very little is said in regard to Christian history. It is a subject which I have already treated, to the best of my ability, in published works, such as *Exploratio Evangelica* and *A Historic View of the New Testament.* And I have little that is fresh to add. It is true that with the great majority of English writers on the subject, the acceptance of historic method is but grudging and partial. But it is slowly but surely making its way. And its main principles are regarded as beyond dispute in all schools of scientific history. There is no need to attack a cause which is gradually dying. And it is the less desirable to do so, because a sudden and violent inrush of historic method would, beyond doubt, bring in danger to the religious views on which the conduct of most Christians is founded. A gradual infiltration of the method is really preferable.

(3) But by far the most important, in regard to religious creed, of all the fundamental changes of mentality, is that which consists in the development of the methods of experience and research in the investigation of the faculties of man, and their substitution for the logical and *a priori* procedure of Greek metaphysics. Philosophy of a kind must always remain; but there is a vast difference between philosophy which starts from some *a priori* thesis and argues down to the facts of mind and thought, of God and man, and

philosophy which is based upon psychology, which takes its facts thence and tries to make out what those facts imply. Here the greatest recent discovery is undoubtedly that of the unconscious element in the human mind. And with that discovery goes the perception that the active and conative faculties of man are the most important part of him, and the cognitive and reflective faculties far less closely connected with his ultimate being. William James especially, in his vigorous and incisive writings, has emphasised the truth of this view.

The results of this new attention to the psychology of experience have been far-reaching. Even in the matter of medicine it has completely changed the treatment of such diseases as are not the result of infection or of mere physical disturbance. Faith-healing and suggestion are no longer regarded as appropriate only to quacks; but are used in great hospitals, and with results which no reasonable man can dispute. In all education a psychological foundation, which analyses the faculties of children and adults, and ascertains by induction how to make the best use of them, has become necessary. Naturally, the discarding of tradition, and the over-valuation of limited experience may often lead us astray. The Montessori system, for example, lays, in my opinion, far too little stress on the need for training the will as well as the intelli-

gence. Mistakes must needs be made; but they must be corrected, not by a mere return to traditional ways, but by a wider and a more carefully analysed experience.

It is the same in religion. Here also an analysis of experience must be the ground of any rational theology. If any communion between God and man be possible, it must be the subject of investigation; and the true in regard to it must be separated from the false. And we may take this course without any fear. For if such communication were not a real thing, a belief in it could not have persisted with such indomitable energy through all ages. It has, however, been always and everywhere overlaid with a mass of false or at least disputable theory, from the burden of which it must be freed. But the burden must be lifted with the utmost care and reverence. The wheat and the tares grow together, and we have to be very careful not to root up both together.

These vast changes in the mental horizon of mankind oblige us to look at the historic creeds of Christendom in quite a new light. It does not necessarily follow that those creeds are outworn and useless. They do undoubtedly reflect, not merely the mentality of the early Church, but also its practical necessities. Indeed, the view just stated of the supremacy of the active and practical over the theoretic faculties of man at

once suggests that the Creeds were not in reality, though they might be in appearance, mere logical and *a priori* constructions, but were a reflection in the world of logical thought of religious feeling and experience. Hence a mere attack on them from the side of logic and science might entirely miss what is of real value in them. They have not to be exploded, but to be accounted for.

Any modern criticism of them, to be satisfactory, must start from an analysis of human nature, and especially from an investigation of the nature of spirit and of personality.

In all our perceptions clearness of vision and energy of emotion are almost in inverse proportion to one another. When we feel strongly on any subject, to learn the exact truth about it is repellent to us, is often hateful. Yet emotion is like a climbing plant which may without injury be transferred from one prop to another, and which will learn to cling as closely to the new support as to the old. History is full of examples of such transference, and I need not pause to cite them. There have been strong emotional prejudices which have militated against the reception of evidence in regard to the nature of the soul. But, as William James has put it,[1] "Let empiricism once become associated with religion, as hitherto through some strange misunderstand-

[1] *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 314.

ings it has been associated with irreligion, and I believe that a new era of religion, as well as of philosophy, will be ready to begin." "I fully believe that such an empiricism is a more natural ally than dialectics ever were, or can be, of the religious life." By pursuing this method of empiricism, or reasonable investigation, James produced an epoch-making work on the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, treating the phenomena of the religious life not as parts of this or that religious teaching, but as phases of the activities of the soul in the presence of spiritual realities. And by pursuing this method I think it possible to present a view of God and the future life which will not, certainly, correspond with all our wishes and emotions, but which may lie before us as a grand range of facts and possibilities.

No one, by searching, can find out God. And no one, by the mere study of the facts of experience, can work out for himself a satisfactory religion. Religion, like power and happiness, comes from within, or rather depends on man's relations to the spiritual source of life. But, until a man has revised the creed of Christianity in the light of history and psychology, he will not be able to defend it in the forum of discussion, nor to discern in it what has been temporary, and is ready to fall away, and what is of permanent or even of perpetual validity. As a matter of fact, though the Creeds have been kept unaltered

in words, they have changed their real meaning constantly with a changing intellectual outlook. And the great question now is what they mean to *us*. How can the jewels be reset so as to suit modern modes of thought ?

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF PERSONALITY

I

FUNDAMENTAL to our whole inquiry is the subject of personality. And personality is exactly one of those matters which seem at first sight simple, yet soon lead us beyond our depth in the ocean of thought. Like the kindred subject of free-will, it has exercised and will exercise the utmost faculties of man, without admitting of a final and objective solution.

From the point of view of common sense and daily life, we can scarcely do better than accept the statement of Dr Sanday in his little work, *Personality in Christ and in Ourselves*.[1] The inner self, he says, is the principle of unity and continuity in a man's life, the vehicle of reflective consciousness; and at the same time it possesses a power of initiative and control. Thus it is at once a reflective and an active power, a centre on which outward impressions converge, and a source of force and action in the world.

Here, however, we stop short at the obvious, and do not try to fathom what Tennyson calls

[1] P. 34.

" the abyssmal depths of personality." What is this personality, whence comes it, and whither does it go ? " From the great deep to the great deep it goes " ; and we have no means of stopping it, analysing or examining it. In what relation does it stand to the world to spirit and to God ? The Greeks spoke of it as a spark of divine fire, which comes from God and returns to God. This, of course, is but a metaphor, an image. But perhaps by metaphor and image we may gain more light on the subject than by more formal analysis. It is, however, maintained by excellent authorities that the psychological researches of modern times have put us in a more favourable position for considering the whole question. Our chief advantage lies in the discovery—for it is no mere theory—made both by physiologists and psychologists, that alike in the case of men and animals the active and conative faculties are primary and basal : and the intellectual faculties, whatever their nobility, are later and secondary ; and are always in a great degree dependent for stimulus and direction on the active powers. This view I must assume as established.

The philosophy or the psychology of knowledge from this point of view is simple. Each human being is a centre of force, a nucleus whence force is always issuing. The discovery of radium, a substance which constantly gives out energy,

affecting everything around it, but not perceptibly diminishing in substance or in force, gives us an analogy, which, if not pressed too far, is helpful. To a particle of radium we may compare each human spirit, always working outwards, and as it works finding resistances, out of which it frames for itself an universe, or rather, through which it discovers for itself the universe which exists without it, and apart from its activity.

These last two ways of regarding the matter are, from the purely intellectual point of view, almost equivalent. But from the practical and active point of view they differ as hell and heaven. For the great practical problem of man's life is to escape from the merely subjective and personal view of the world into one which is real and objective. The search for reality has in all ages been the great problem of philosophy, and the great thinkers have made the transit, some in one fashion and some in another; but in one way or another all have had to make it, or else to be confined for ever to the merely subjective in knowledge, and to sterility and ineffectiveness in action. To me the whole question of reality and objectivity appears, as in some measure it appeared to Kant, to be one not of intellectual judgment but of practical volition. It is on this side that the works of the great intellectualists, from Spinoza to Lord Haldane, seem to me deficient and unsatis-

factory, or, rather, to require supplement and completion.

Our experience of life has to do not with what is self-evolved or imaginary, but with what is real and serious, and on the way in which we deal with it depends not only the value of our philosophy, but the character of our lives, our efficiency in the world, in a word, the saving of our souls.

Taking, then, experience as real and objective, we proceed to work outwards in touch with it. From resistances of a physical kind we discover the facts and laws of the material world. From resistances of the human medium we discover the world of other selves, amid whom we learn to live in friendship or enmity. From inner and spiritual resistances we learn the nature of the spiritual world, in which God is supreme.

Apart from our active energy we might live amid these surroundings and not be aware of them ; at most, they would affect us as a meaningless kaleidoscopic show. But activity, energy, purpose, explore the possibilities, and reveal to us an external world, a world of orderly resistances, which limits us in every direction.

The same experience of resistance is the means whereby we build up the knowledge of ourselves. To perception, which has to do with what is without us, corresponds sensation, which shows us what is within us. We become conscious, first

of our wills, then of our bodies, of our intellectual faculties, of our moral natures, all of which together make us up as individuals.

The experience of resistance reveals to us our bodies, which are in the main subject to our wills, though it requires constant exercise to keep them so. It reveals to us our minds, and the ways of thought which we cannot alter or escape. It is constantly showing us emotions of pleasure or pain, love or anger, expectation or despair, which often come upon us as a surprise, and it shows us our own wills as definitely working in one direction or another, towards good or evil, towards success or failure, in the line of duty or in the line of self-indulgence, and the same experience of resistance in the world of spirit of which we are members reveals to us great spiritual powers which are ever working on us from without and stimulating us from within.

II

In a powerful and suggestive work on *Social Psychology*, Professor M'Dougall sets forth seven instincts as primary and original in man. They are the instincts of flight, repulsion, curiosity, pugnacity, self-abasement, self-assertion, and the parental instinct. I do not regard this analysis as altogether happy. It is particularly unsatisfactory to begin with flight and fear and repulsion,

that is, on the weak and poor side of human nature, its negative rather than its positive aspect. And it does not seem to me that man possesses a primitive instinct of self-abasement, which is only an absence of the instinct of self-assertion. I think the analysis might have been carried further back. The greatest primitive instinct in man seems to me to be self-assertion, or a desire for the furtherance of life. Tennyson was wise when he wrote :

> " 'Tis life, not death, for which we pant,
> More life and fuller that we want."

And this most primitive of all instincts, which one finds in the mollusc as well as in the philosopher, divides into two branches, the desire of individual life and the desire of propagation. Out of these two desires all others arise in the process of evolution. But the course of desire is different according to the sphere in which it operates. In the life of the material body it acts simply by resisting disease and injury and decay, appropriating to itself the material surroundings of the body, urging to sexual action. In the social life it acts primitively in war and strife, and the appropriation of women. But under the influence of higher spiritual powers, man learns social conduct first in the family or tribe, then in the community. In the dawn of the spiritual life man tries to secure and to turn to his own pur-

poses the help of the surrounding spiritual power, by the help of magic and spell. He comes into contact with that power in pure selfishness; but he learns by degrees to subordinate himself to it, he is vanquished by its force and goodness; and magic gives way by degrees to religion, self-assertion is replaced by love of what is better than himself. All his instincts become more refined, more moral, more intellectual.

Man has lower and higher possibilities. Since he is a denizen of the world of sense, it is natural that the exercise of those powers which tend to the vigour of the individual and the carrying on of the race should produce in him a glow of pleasure. A moderate indulgence of those powers makes up a great part of the happiness of life. Many men rise no higher. But to every one who cherishes ideals, a mere sensuous existence, a porcine satisfaction with life, soon wears off its freshness. It fails to satisfy his higher nature. A truer and a far more durable satisfaction comes from the love of God and man, from helping one's neighbours, and labouring for the improvement of life by transfusing it with the divine ideas which are revealed within.

While the comparison of a human spirit to a particle of radium is from the practical point of view helpful and suggestive, it requires at the same time careful guarding; it is a comparison, not an explanation. It does not follow because

there is some likeness between the spirit of a man and a particle of radium that there is likeness in all respects. The similarity consists in the constant outward working of both in the world of experience.

An obvious point of dissimilarity is that, while one particle of radium is just like another in its working, human beings differ one from another in every way. One personality is vigorous, another inert; one is naturally prone to love and sympathy, another by nature self-contained; one is active and emotional, another contemplative and intellectual. We notice all these differences in others and in ourselves; but their origin is most obscure. Sometimes they appear to be an inheritance from parents; sometimes they seem to go back to remoter ancestors; sometimes they look very much like a new departure, whence and how originated we cannot in the least discover. And in the course of living they change, under the stress of circumstances or under the influence of others.

Another great difference between the action of radium and human action is that the former takes place uniformly and in all directions. But human force, when it has once, so to speak, felt its surroundings, has the power to act in any direction it pleases. By the power of self-determination, which exists in its most intimate nature, it directs the stream of energy in some directions rather than others, it inhibits some kinds of action and

encourages others, thus limiting and controlling its action upon the world, and by so doing forming in itself a definite individuality.

Whether a man can exert physical force beyond the limits of his bodily frame is as yet matter of controversy. Such experiments as those of Dr Maxwell in Paris, and those of Mr Crawford at Belfast, seem to indicate such possibilities. But it is unnecessary for me to take up this subject; and it is premature, for there now exists at Paris an International Metapsychic Institute, recognised by the French Government, and controlled by a Council on which sit some of the greatest authorities in France, England, and Italy. It has a completely equipped laboratory, and is set up in order to test in a thoroughly scientific way all the psychical phenomena attending spiritualist séances.[1]

When we turn to the facts of mind and spirit, we are in a clearer light. For the phenomena of mesmerism, of suggestion, and, above all, of telepathy, show that the old notion that man is a self-contained and impervious unit is a delusion.

As regards telepathy, I may content myself with the verdict of Dr W. M'Dougall, who writes[2]: "I cannot attempt to present here the evidence for the reality of telepathy. It must suffice to say that it is of such a nature as to

[1] See the *Modern Churchman*, xii. p. 645.

[2] *Body and Mind*, p. 349.

compel the assent of any competent person who studies it impartially." And the fact of telepathy is fatal to two views—first, to any mere materialist explanation of the universe, and second, to what one may call the merely atomic or monadic theory of personality.

It is usual and natural to think of our personalities just as we think of our bodies, as self-contained units. But this view is largely illusive. Men's souls are in a sense individual, capable of character and affections, of growth and degeneracy, but they are not cut off one from another by rigid and impassable barriers.

It is by contact with the visible and physical world that our bodies grow and take form, through food and exercise and disease. It is through contact with our fellow-men and society that we form character. It is by our relations with, and love for, the spiritual world that we develop an inner being and attain to eternal life. The dictum of Kant, that there is nothing good in the world but a good will, is true so far as individuals are concerned; but there is also in the spiritual world a great current of goodness which may flow into individual lives; and there are also evil currents which bear men away to destruction and perdition.

The course of medical discovery in recent times, and particularly the experiences of the Great War, have put in a clearer and stronger light than

ever before, the predominance of the inner over the outer, the superiority of will and spirit over flesh. It is now known to what an extent suggestion can cure disease, and direct the nerves and the blood. Faith-healing has been known from the beginning of history. There is much of it in primitive sorcery. The shrines of Æsculapius in Greece were places where healing took place far more often by mental suggestion than by bodily prescriptions. In the early time of the Christian faith, as every one is aware, cures by faith-healing, which were regarded as miraculous, were of constant occurrence. And so on through the Middle Ages. But unfortunately the facts of suggestion and faith-healing had become inextricably mixed up with theories as to the power which wrought such cures: and those who had experience of the healing passed on at once to believe in the saint or the relics which were its occasion. And so at the Reformation, when the veneration of saints and of relics was thrown aside by the Reformers, faith-healing was thrown aside with them, and was regarded, at all events in northern countries, as a mere form of imposture. In the last century, such cures as those worked at Lourdes led observers to see that there were realities underneath erroneous historic and psychical views in the miracles of the Roman Church. And now the great success of Christian Scientists and of faith-healers of every kind has

put it beyond question that it was rash to reject the facts of suggestion merely because they were closely connected with unnecessary or unsatisfactory theories as to the source whence came the power of the healers. In fact, at present many of those who practise healing by suggestion openly confess that they do not understand the source of the powers they possess ; they are only conscious, through experience, that they can exercise those powers. Indeed, the prevalent view now seems to be that the healers can only act by rousing self-suggestion in the mind of the person to be healed.

However this may be, and whatever may be the true psychological explanation of faith-healing, what it shows beyond doubt or cavil is the superiority of that which is within to that which is without, of the spirit to the body. For this very reason the great medical schools, which always have a strong bias towards materialism, have almost invariably disputed the value of faith-healing and despised those who practised it. But at all events they cannot now deny its validity, or maintain that it is a mere imposture.

If we free ourselves from the natural prejudice which closely connects the personality with the body, and if we realise that the borders of personality are not rigidly exclusive, we shall have no great difficulty in accepting the view that it

is quite legitimate to speak of personalities which are not merely individual, the personalities of families, of groups, and of states. As has been pointed out by the writers on social psychology, the intellectual and moral qualities of an organised group of persons is not the mere sum of those qualities which belong to the individual members of the group, but something additional, and even something different.

It requires some exercise of the imagination fully to grasp this fact, since in the group there is no subjective consciousness as there is in the individual; the personality of the group cannot speak with an audible voice, nor be rigidly outlined against the background of the surrounding society; it is somewhat like the mathematical formulæ which cannot be objectively presented to the mind, but can only be discerned in working; but nevertheless it is a definite factor in the world, of which every man of action and every statesman has to take account. In some societies of animals it may be more clearly discerned; every one can see that the hive of bees and the nest of ants have an intelligence and a character far above that of the separate bee or ant, often, indeed, provoking our astonishment. Human societies are not, in the present state of the world, thus clearly marked out and closely united. But nevertheless there exists in every society and in every state a social personality which can

impinge upon, and often control, the tendencies of the members of the group.

In quiet and peaceful times this is less observable, individualism is dominant, and the common life passes into the background. But when a time of stress and conflict comes, individuals are not merely affected, but are often quite borne away by the pressure of the common life. In 1914 and the following years this phenomenon was insistent, and had the control of history. However strongly organised the personality of an individual might be, he could then scarcely ever resist the force of a self-asserting national personality; he was borne away by it, often to enterprises to which his personal bias had the strongest antipathy.

There can be no doubt that the surface of self-consciousness, which seems so hard and smooth, covers a great deal of illusion. We all are disposed to exaggerate the degree of our free-will; we often suppose ourselves to be acting in freedom when we are not really free. We are constantly mistaking the nature of the motives from which we act; supposing them to be higher or lower, or at all events different from those which really sway us. We suppose ourselves to act after full deliberation, when in fact some ancestral tendency holds us in an iron grip. In the same way, actions which we suppose to be purely individual are often dictated to us by a wider group con-

sciousness. And often the impulse towards them may be communicated to our spirits by spiritual forces which are independent of us, and which we regard as external, though really they are within us, at all events while they act. No doubt a resolute will could in any case determine the line of conduct, and shut out external influence. But we are not made that way. Our personalities are fought over by a multitude of spiritual forces, ancestral, surrounding, and above us; and the most that we can do, in ordinary life, is to help the influences which we respect or love, and hinder those which we dislike. Our wills are ours, no doubt. But so are our bodies ours. And as the body may be prevented from free action, not only by external forces, but also from the peculiarities of our physical frames, just so the freedom of the will is bounded not only by the wills of others, which may dominate us, but by the character which has been formed by previous action of the will. There is an inertia arising from habit of life, which it may require a strong effort to conquer, or which, indeed, cannot be conquered at all, save by power furnished from without, some spiritual influence coming from the group mind, or from the supreme Ruler of the spiritual world.

CHAPTER III

PERSONALITY AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

THE greatest and most essential difference between a material substance like radium and the human spirit is, that whereas the former—at least so far as we can discern—does not depend on anything beyond and outside itself, the human spirit is not an independent and self-contained unit, but is in contact with, and dependent upon, an unlimited flow of power and energy, by the aid of which it can perform many deeds quite beyond the reach of its natural powers; and if it be cut off from or abandoned by that power, it dries up and fails like a pool left on the seashore by the retreating sea. A man can welcome the spiritual influence, by opening the doors of his spirit; or he can harden himself against it; and that is the difference between life in the spirit and life in the flesh and the self. It is impossible to maintain that this stream of spiritual influence is always on the side of good: sometimes, as the best men of every age have felt, it seems rather to draw us in the direction of evil; but the good in it infinitely overbalances the evil. And history and experience show that the only way to a good

existence, the path which leads to life, lies through harmony with that great stream of spiritual influence, which has by stages led men up to the highest points attained by human societies and individuals. In the history of the race, as we know it, good has been on the whole stronger than evil. This conviction is hard to maintain in times of disappointment and spiritual dryness. There be many that say, "Who will show us any good?" But the individuals and the nations which fall away from belief in the ultimate dominance of the good are condemned to perish.

I

To attempt to throw light upon the difficult questions of the life of the spirit by means of comparisons with the world of sense may always involve some peril. For an analogy must always be a suggestion rather than an explanation; and there is always a danger that those who appreciate the analogy may strain it beyond its proper bounds. But it is much less risky to set forth two or three analogies in the place of one; for the different images in some degree cancel one another, and their suggestion becomes freer from perversion.

The Founder of Christianity was wont to use physical analogies to illuminate the life of the spirit. And he takes precisely the precaution

which I have mentioned; he does not work out special comparisons in detail, but briefly mentions one after another, so that light may glance on the subject under consideration at many angles. He speaks of the phenomena of the weather, of sunrise and sunset, of the way in which corn grows in the fields, of the tending of sheep, of the search for treasure; and in each case directs a ray of light on the great and complicated matter of the growth of spiritual life in the individual and in society. The procedure which I propose to adopt may therefore claim the highest authority.

The personality of a man, in relation to the world of spirit, may be compared to one of those little coral islands which abound in the Pacific Ocean. It has been built up by the lives and deeds of thousands of ancestors since life began on our planet. They toiled, often in dark places, but each left by energy and action a little deposit which helped to build up the foundation of a life, while the whole construction rested on the solid ground. The coral island is a beautiful thing; it gives a resting-place to trees and insects and birds; but it is isolated only in reference to the surface of the sea; with the solid earth it is invisibly continuous.

Another comparison may be made to a floating iceberg.[1] Only a small part of the iceberg is

[1] This comparison has already been made by W. James.

visible above the level of the sea; a far larger part floats beneath and sustains what is visible. Sometimes, as the ice slowly melts, the centre of gravity of the mass is shifted, and quickly or slowly it rolls over, displaying on the surface a new facet. It is suggestive to compare the iceberg to a human life, with clear-cut form on the surface, yet largely concealed beneath the level of consciousness, and liable to sudden shiftings, the cause of which is quite invisible, while the results are conspicuous and often startling, as when religious conversion takes place.

A third, even better, comparison would liken the individual life to a narrow inlet of the sea, making its way between rocks and promontories into the solid land. From the rocky surroundings it takes form and character, and gains individuality; yet never for a moment is it separated from the great sea, the tides and storms of which daily affect it. If it were so separated it would dry up and disappear. And through the sea it has a way of connection with all other gulfs and inlets; so that in fact a stone thrown into, or a fish leaping in, any of them, will produce an effect, of course quite unobservable and infinitesimal, upon it.

The will of man may be compared to a sluicegate which may be open or shut. When it is shut, he cuts himself off, so far as he can, from the influences of the spiritual life about him,

influences good or bad, healthful or degrading. When it is opened, he admits these influences.

Such comparisons, which it would be easy to multiply, may serve to give a slight hint of the relation of the individual personality to the surrounding world of spirit.

When we speak of the unconscious, the phrase requires some explanation. It really means that which does not enter into the personal consciousness or self-consciousness of individuals. It by no means implies that what we call in reference to ourselves as individuals unconscious, may not be in a different and even a higher sense conscious, though not conscious in us. As I shall try to show later on, the very important element in the unconscious which is divine is necessarily recognised by us as in a high sense conscious. And I think that most men feel in their relations to the unconscious that there is in all revelations of it, and all impulses which come from it, something akin to consciousness. It is an unmapped ocean; but when we are on the borders of it and try to look at it, we find that it has currents and tides, waves and storms, which are so full of an intense life that the very phrase, the unconscious, appears very inadequate.

It is the function of every man, as a conscious being, belonging at once to the visible and the invisible world, to modify the visible world by means of the ideas which he takes from the

invisible. From the point of view of psychology man possesses intellect, emotion, and will. And to those three faculties three kinds of working in the world are appropriate. It is our business by our intellects to find out the exact truth of things, to discover the laws of working of nature and of human society. It is our business by our emotions to love what is beautiful, to find happiness in admiration of all that is pure and lovely in nature and in man, and to further it in the world of sense. It is our business by the will to set ourselves on the side of the morally good, and to work for its victory in the world. By such action a man promotes the will of God in the visible order of things and forms within him at the same time a definite character.

If the analogies by which I have tried to explain in some degree the nature of personality are at all valid, then every deed done in the world not only tends to mould the individual personality of the doer, but also has an effect in the world of spirit, tends to lower or to raise its tone in the matter of truth of beauty or of goodness. As a stone thrown into a pond sets in motion circles on the surface which spread, constantly enlarging, to the edge of the pond, and then react backwards, so that in an inconceivably minute degree they go on acting and reacting for all time; so any great discovery of truth, any vision of ideal beauty, any noble action, works in the world of

spirit and goes on working, serving in some infinitely minute way to smooth the path for the future discovery of truth, for the vision of other aspects of beauty, for the performance of noble deeds in the times that follow. Thus man may take part in the great process of creation, which began before the earliest geologic times and goes on into the infinite future.

Some readers may think that I am using the phrases of vague pantheism, that I am not clearly distinguishing between three things which must not be confused, the unconscious, the spiritual, and the divine. At this preliminary stage of our investigation my language is necessarily vague. But as we proceed it will become evident that I am quite aware of the danger of confusing these things, and I hope to show that I am no pantheist, but a theist of a very different kind, and, indeed, as I venture to believe, a Christian whose beliefs are closer to those of the Founder of Christianity and his immediate followers than those which are commonly current in our Churches. The unconscious may be regarded as a sort of protoplasm, out of which the conscious spirits of the universe issue, human beings, and other spirits, and even the Creative Spirit.

II

The Sub-conscious and the Super-conscious

When we come to the consideration of the relations between the conscious and unconscious phases of man's life, we cannot do better than accept Mr Myers' comparison of the conscious part of man's intelligence to a solar spectrum as it appears to the human eye.[1] "The limits of our spectrum do not inhere in the sun that shines, but in the eye that marks his shining. Beyond each end of that prismatic ribbon are ether-waves of which our retina takes no cognisance. Beyond the red end come waves whose potency we still recognise, but as heat and not as light. Beyond the violet end are waves still more mysterious, whose very existence man for ages never suspected, and whose intimate potencies are still but obscurely known. Even thus, I venture to affirm, beyond each end of our conscious spectrum extends a range of faculty and perception, exceeding the known range, but as yet indistinctly guessed. The artifices of the modern physicist have extended far in each direction the visible spectrum known to Newton. It is for the modern psychologist to discover artifices which may extend in each direction the

[1] Parts of the following pages appeared in the *Hibbert Journal* for 1911.

conscious spectrum as known to Plato or to Kant." [1] "The range of our subliminal mentation is more extended than the range of our supraliminal. At one end of the scale we find *dreams*, a normal subliminal product, but of less practical value than any form of sane supraliminal thought. At the other end of the scale we find that the rarest, most precious knowledge comes to us from outside the ordinary field, through eminently subliminal processes." [2] I cannot but think that if Mr Myers had grasped this clue with more resolution, and followed it up with greater tenacity, his work would have been even more valuable than it is, though, of course, it is unjust to judge severely the work of the first explorer who "bursts into a silent sea." Other writers on psychical phenomena have sometimes not even seen the need of a scale involving higher and lower. This distinction is in fact essential. Our lower nervous centres have a life of their own, by which the necessary functions of the body are carried on, without any knowledge on our part. And through our lives, as we form habits, and learn to do unconsciously what we at first did by conscious effort, we are, so to speak, organising the unconscious, handing over to it more and more of our ordinary working day activities. But for what we give up in this way we may or ought to make compensation by the opposite

[1] *Human Personality*, i. 17. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 72.

process : by bringing into consciousness more and more of that which is above us.

The conscious personality of man is a thing which has gradually, through an unmeasured series of ages, been brought about by a slow organisation of the unconscious to serve the ethical needs of the race. As we look down the biological scale we see a dawning consciousness, the nature of which we cannot fully realise, in the animal world. Among all human beings found in travel or read of in history it is fully formed ; so that its growth can be but a matter of conjecture and inference. Perhaps some of the most interesting studies in regard to it may be made in the case of such creatures as the ant and the bee, which have developed intelligence and purpose, by means of their peculiar social organisations, to an extent far beyond what might seem to belong to their size and structure. But man himself, when in an unconscious or semi-conscious condition, or in a state of infancy, can give us much information as to the rise and the nature of consciousness.

Unless we grasp and hold fast the notion that there is a higher and a lower in the unconscious life, that it has a scale which is at bottom ethical, psychical phenomena will remain for us a confused tangle, or may be the means of leading us astray.

It is impossible at this point to avoid some

consideration of the phenomena of hypnotism, for by them the question of the relation between the conscious and the unconscious in man is raised in an acute and inevitable form. And with hypnotism goes that spiritism which is as a system built upon hypnotism. Here, unfortunately, we are entering ground on which it will be impossible altogether to avoid controversy. But I will confine myself to a statement of my own views, without entering into the innumerable cross paths which lead to interminable discussion. I will try to keep fact and theory as far as possible apart.

This path of knowledge was opened wider by the discoveries of Mesmer, who was the first to set forth in a striking and effective way the direct power of a mind and will over the mind and will of others. To whatever unworthy purposes mesmerism has been turned, however it has been mingled with imposture and the love of money, it was yet based on actual facts of human nature. Almost every great scientific invention appears first as a toy, before its serious use is discovered. It was by a kind of instinct that the ruling schools of medicine, in their traditional materialism, for a long while refused to allow that there was in mesmerism, or the hypnotism which has taken its place, anything save fancy and imposture. That phase of opposition has, however, passed away; no one capable of understanding the nature of

evidence could now deny that hypnotism has brought to light unsuspected powers of the human spirit, and has proved how large a part of our life and personality never comes to the surface or into the field of ordinary observation. And investigations such as those of the Society for Psychical Research have carried the evidence further and brought into the light a mass of phenomena which are not necessarily connected with hypnotism, yet which belong to the unconscious side of our lives—dreams, motor automatisms, trances, ecstasy, and the like—which must be taken into account by anyone who hereafter may write on psychology.

The subject, though an interesting, is scarcely an alluring one. At present the true and the false, the healthy and the morbid, the moral and the immoral, are mingled almost inextricably in the writings which deal with the more obscure psychical phenomena. One feels in reading them that one is in a land where barbarous survivals are mixed up with lofty aspirations, where witchcraft is scarcely distinguished from religion, and the morbid visions of the hysteric are put on the same level as the sacred inspirations of the prophet. The science of the unconscious is yet in its infancy, and has not learned to know its right hand from its left, to distinguish between good and evil, to discern between fact and fancy. And yet one sees that many of the most sacred

experiences of mankind are of the same class as the more repulsive phenomena of hypnotism. They resemble them as good wine resembles vinegar, or a sweet fruit a poisonous berry. Those who would learn anatomy are obliged to make very unpleasant dissections of dead bodies. And those who would really understand the facts of the higher religions cannot afford to throw aside phenomena of which the early Christian Fathers would doubtless have said that they were produced by demons working in imitation of the angels of light.

The great defect and danger of spiritism is its want of an ethical standard, its way of confusing the higher and the lower in its revelation of the unconscious. I am convinced that often the higher and more worthy of the inspirations which pass into the world pass not through the gate of the human faculties which have become unconscious as man has become more civilised, but at the other end of the scale, through the gate of human character and personality which is in touch with something not lower but higher than itself. It is not that which civilised man has in common with the savage that can serve as a connecting link between man and God, but rather the highest parts of human nature.

Even writers like Mr Myers, and (in a less degree) Professor William James, seem to me not sufficiently to distinguish between what is sub-

conscious and what is super-conscious in men. It is true that from the merely psychological side it is not easy to distinguish these. But they can be distinguished by other tests, notably that of fruits. And they must be kept apart. It is not easy to distinguish logically between a good picture and a bad, but the difference is really enormous. It is not easy to make distinction between the love between men and women which is merely instinctive and that which is the basis of all the higher manliness and womanliness; but the distance between them is like the distance between heaven and hell.

By far the greater part of the phenomena on which the spiritualists pride themselves is in relation to that which is not above but below the level of conscious life. Some of the lower forms of animal life, insects especially, have powers which seem to us mysterious; their senses are open to impressions which we cannot discern. The way, for example, in which the male and female of rare butterflies contrive to find one another out over great distances shows a power, possibly of scent, of which we can scarcely form a notion. The senses on which wild animals depend for their living are sharpened to an almost supernatural acuteness. The savage will find his way through a forest by minute indications which he can scarcely explain to a civilised man. And the sensitively organised

among savages, who become magicians or medicine-men, do not merely live upon the ignorance and credulity of the tribe, but appear to possess second sight and other means of information besides those of ordinary sense. Among ourselves second sight and magic still linger in the more backward parts of the country. The possession of these faculties belongs not to the best and most ethical of the race, but to the most primitive elements among the people.

It is doubtless out of more vague and general faculties that the senses of the civilised man have been gradually formed in the long course of ages by the stress of a life becoming ever more conscious and personal. Man has given up some of the possibilities which once lay before him, in order to reach a higher level upon the whole. The præter-usual faculties of the sensitives are in fact a survival from a past level of being, or a reversion to it. In America they are probably one of nature's reactions from a too ordinary and prosaic level of life, a life without the passion, the poetry, the imagination, which are refined and spiritualised forms of the abnormal faculties of the savage.

Thus I certainly cannot agree with Mr Myers when he speaks of trance and ecstasy as the highest form of communion between man and the unconscious. While we must allow that occasionally spiritual truth and lofty impulse

have come to man by way of trance, yet ecstasy is a phenomenon infinitely more familiar to the medicine-man of the savage, and to the ministers of the lower religions, than to man in his higher forms. It is a rank shoot, such as are the suckers which spring from the roots of rose trees when the vitality of the tree does not flow properly into its branches. Such shoots need cutting and grafting before they can produce fair flowers. So races of men when oppressed by a too materialist and humdrum civilisation have a tendency to hark back to the ways of more keenly alive, though less cultivated ancestors.

It is no doubt true that some of the highest teaching and of the noblest deeds of the past have been the outcome of trance and ecstasy. St Paul was caught up into the third heaven, and heard words which he will not repeat. Socrates would stand rooted to the ground, and insensible to all that was going on about him, and the divine voice by which he guided his conduct would at such times be heard by him. Joan of Arc implicitly followed the guidance of voices which she heard in her trances. So the saints of the earlier, and the religious leaders of the later, Church have frequently been in the habit of falling into states of trance, and have in those states received great messages for mankind.

But these divine communications have been few in comparison. And they have constantly

become rarer as man has grown more rational and more fully conscious. The progress of civilisation may have deprived us of some things we are unwilling to lose, as it has given us much for which we may be thankful. In our day it is quite certain that no man of sound judgment would value a statement uttered by a sensitive in a state of trance more than the well-weighed words of a wise and good man.

In his treatment of the exceptional phenomenon which we call genius, Mr Myers does not take the best line. He speaks of it as a sudden uprush of the sub-conscious in a man. This is a better view than that of writers like Lambroso, who classify together genius and madness. Yet it is defective. An uprush of the sub-conscious in a man might be an intensification in him of what is most like the animals, and might drag him to a far lower level than that of the conscious self. But often in the flashes of genius it is not the sub-conscious which prevails, but the super-conscious. Something of heaven is drawn down to earth. The man of genius is the man who sees further than others into the nature and causes of things; but he does so usually not by a sudden vision, but by long pondering. A better view of genius, as indeed Mr Myers allows in another place,[1] is that it is an intensifying, by an accession of spiritual force, of the highest powers

[1] *Human Personality*, i. 78.

of a man, the most clearly marked points of his personality. We must recognise the fact that in almost all inspiration there is a joint-working of man and not-man ; that a man can in a measure prepare himself for inspiration, as an iron rod can be arranged to attract the lightning. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and the gifts are not usually bestowed apart from the receptivity of those to whom they are given. There is, no doubt, an unexplained element. Sometimes God chooses the weak things of the world to confound things that are strong, and makes foolishness triumphant over wisdom. We may recognise here the working of a deeper law ; but we must not commit the fatal mistake of supposing that God rules not by law but by caprice.

The highest thing we find in the world is a noble human personality. And it is one of the great practical paradoxes of life that the human personality which is most constantly in quiet and patient communion with the divine does not thereby become poor and colourless, does not sink into a mere vehicle of an external power, but develops more remarkably on its own lines, gradually growing nearer to the height of that side of divine power and wisdom with which it has affinity. In the mesmeric or spiritualist trance, on the other hand, the sensitive loses the conscious life to become the medium by which

certain unexplained intelligences operate. And the more often this takes place the more completely does the sensitive lose in power of will and character, becoming possessed, the prey of other forces.

And it must be added that if we accept the test set up by the Founder of Christianity, "Ye shall know them by their fruits," spiritism will hardly pass the ordeal. It has been noted, both in England and America, how much laxity in conduct, especially in financial probity and sexual morality, follows in the wake of spiritism. And the supposed revelations from the unseen world, when they are printed in books, are certainly not at all on the same level as the great inspired books of Christian history. There is much in them of vague sentimentality; but little of a definite character which can be brought to any test of fact.

It has been observed that when the circle is spiritist, the communications always profess to come from the spirits of men and women who have lived in the world; but when the circle does not consist of convinced spiritists they professedly come from a variety of sources, fairies, demons or earth spirits. The intelligences who communicate in some circles teach the doctrine of the transmigration of souls into new bodies; in other circles they repudiate this teaching; the tenor of their assertions is quite different in

England or America from what it is in France, and so forth. There does not at present appear to be any certainty that the communications move outside the thoughts and beliefs of those present at the sitting. It has been shrewdly said that the only spirit whose working can be clearly traced at spiritualist meetings is the *Zeitgeist*. Therefore I think we are justified in claiming that the religious views professed by the spiritists, views revealed in trance and expressed in automatic writing, must be, not indeed set aside as worthless, but judged by the same tests as other professions of faith.

In the teaching of spiritism there is nothing on a level, I do not say with the New Testament, but with the writings of many eminent philosophers and theologians. Swedenborg, who stands highest among those who have professed to obtain a modern revelation from a supernatural source, took for granted in his writings that the Old Testament was verbally and literally inspired by God. What could be the value of a construction based upon such a foundation? The whole history of modern spiritism is of a kind to inspire one with little confidence. It may be, as Mr Myers eagerly believed, that the communications from the unknown realms of spirit are now fast changing their character, and becoming more systematic and more trustworthy. Of the future we need not judge, but

the past lies open to our inspection, and does not stand justified when tried by the Master's tests.

We shall in vain search the spiritist literature of our time for the great ethical ideas which have in the past history of religion made up, and do to-day still make up, its life-blood. It does not tell us of sin and of forgiveness ; it does not represent the path to heaven as a steep and difficult one. It does not dwell on the nobleness of self-sacrifice, of the daily and hourly need of divine grace, without which man is but a poor phantom. It reflects nothing but a vague religiosity, and represents all men as alike in the way of salvation. It is but too true a reflection of what is weak and fanciful in the religion of the age. As in the stern days of the Reformation all the phenomena of sorcery and witchcraft took a lurid hue from the fierce religious feeling of the time, Satan and his spirits and the fate of the doomed showing large in the foreground, so the necromancy of to-day depicts a future state of being colourless and meaningless, like the lives of many comfortable Christians, without spiritual passion or ambition. Mr Myers makes it a great merit of modern spiritism that according to it " of evil spirits other than human there is no news whatever " ; to which we may add that even human spirits seem in the spiritist revelations to be often tricky and mendacious, constantly foolish and trifling, but seldom seriously wicked. But does

a world of milk-and-water platitude bear any relation to our existing human world, full of cruelty and crime, as of noble self-sacrifice ? The future world revealed by spiritists is a fair reflection of their own beliefs, but no great revelation to man.

It is maintained, for example, by Mr A. R. Wallace, a name of the highest rank in scientific research, that the mediocrity and common-place character observable in the communications of the mediums is only what we might expect if the communicators are human beings released from the body, since the mass of mankind are of this ordinary type. If we accept the spiritist communications at their face value, we must allow considerable force to this argument. But we may well prefer to think that, granting the fact of communications of this kind, we do not yet really understand their origin, that they cover much illusion, and that God has reserved for those who love and serve him some better fate than to become wraiths and spooks, and to spend energy in such paltry and superficial talks as constitute the great mass of spiritist revelations.

III

The Conscious and Unconscious in Religion

It is with a feeling of relief that I turn from the phenomena of spiritism to those of will and

personality, from the sub-conscious faculties of man to those which are conscious, from the passivity of the medium to the activities of human character.

It may fairly be said that the essentially active nature of man, the place of will in the constitution of the world, is a truth which has gradually been growing upon humanity during all the ages of its thought. Little was made of the will in the philosophy of Greece, though it was better appreciated by Aristotle than by Plato, and better by the Stoics and the neo-Platonists than by Aristotle. Modern philosophy has made far more of the will than ancient; and in modern philosophy we may see a gradual appreciation of its primacy growing from Locke to Kant, from Kant to Schopenhauer, from Schopenhauer to William James.

The greatest of the discoveries which have resulted in modern days from the better application of method in psychological study is the recognition of the primacy in man of will, as compared with the powers of perceiving and judging. We recognise in man, in the first place, a force working from within outwards. It is of his very essence to strive, to try to impose his own forms upon the outer world. He is not a passive but an active being; and thought, in all its elaboration, must be regarded as a product, and not the primary product, of living.

And when we consider this active centre of force, we shall find it no mere mechanism for the weaving of sensations into experience, and for arranging facts in logical order, but a living creature whose origin goes back to the very beginnings of humanity, and whose evolution is the history of the race. It is the crown of creation, the leaven which the Maker of the world added to the scheme of things visible, in order that by degrees it should leaven the whole, and transform it into a temple of the Divine Spirit.

We have long passed the time when it could be supposed that belief was a matter only of reasoning and consistency. Belief is the expression of a spirit, conditioned indeed by the data of experience and the laws of the human mind; but yet a thing fashioned from within, and not imported from without. What a man really believes, that he is; and by that he regulates his conduct, throwing all his experience into the mould of an inner life, and arranging it on the lines of character.

I do not mean that all belief is a merely individual matter, or that every man has to form it from the elements for himself. Every man is more than a mere individual; he is one of a family, a nation, a church. But we touch ground, so to speak, when we realise that in the last result the forces of which the human universe

is made up are the wills of human beings and the Divine Will which stands over against them and yet works within them. And of any universe which is not human we can in the present state of our faculties know nothing. We only know nature as mirrored in the human consciousness; we only know the will of God as our wills find it out.

If this be the tendency and the result of modern psychology, of man's study of himself, it will at once appear how much the course of thought has done to bring us nearer to the point of view which was taken up by the Founder of Christianity. When he spoke, the world of philosophy was filled with the notion that the intellectual faculties of man were sufficient not only to enable him to discern what was right, but to induce him to do it. To follow reason was regarded as the sum of virtue, and man's passions and emotions were considered to be mere sources of delusion and error. Intellect was treated as the Godlike element in human nature; emotion and volition were placed at a lower level. His teaching that goodness lay in conformity with the will of God, that even for the knowledge of spiritual things obedience was a surer guide than reasoning, that the test of doctrine lay in the fruit which it brought forth in the life, that man must be cleansed from the heart outwards rather than from the intelligence inwards—all this teaching

was quite contrary to the doctrine of the Platonic schools, and might well appear to the Greeks as mere foolishness. And so deeply rooted was the opposite view of life that very soon the intellectual teachings of Platonism became grafted upon the root of Christianity. Even the author of the Fourth Gospel, one of the greatest of theologians of all time, imported into Christianity the Greek doctrine of the Logos, though he was in spirit too near to his Master to adopt a really Greek view.

Man must learn by degrees, and the race only reaches the truth after following misleading paths until it reaches a blind wall. It was impossible for the educated world of Hellenism to change in a moment its point of view. But we may fairly say that the teaching of Christ has been by degrees taking a stronger and stronger hold of thought. And we may fairly say that not until the newer psychology made its way, and the primacy of the active over the reasoning faculties of man was established, could the Christian view appear as really the most philosophic, as most in accord with the facts of human nature and the ways of God as revealed in the working of the world.

IV

It is necessary, however difficult it may be, seriously to attempt the distinction of higher and

lower, to regard religion as an evolution from the lower to the higher, to consider the will of God as a gradual revelation to the world. In this revelation there are three stages: (1) that in which religion is mainly concerned with the sub-conscious; (2) that in which religion is fully conscious; (3) that in which religion is directed towards the super-conscious. In all historic religions these three elements are blended, mixed in various proportions. It is the proportion in which they are mixed which fixes their place in the hierarchy.

(1) The Pagan religions of the ancient world, and the modern religions which are on a level with them, seem to live with faces turned backward, towards the origin of man. In them there survive many of the instincts which lie at the roots of our animal life. When they emphasise the relation of man to the deities, they think of these deities as representing the great facts and processes of nature, in close connection with which man has grown up—the sun as the source of light and heat, the rain which is the cause of fertility to the soil, the rising of the sap in the trees, and the influences of the seasons of the year and the successions of the moons on the instinct of self-propagation. The religions of Babylon and of Egypt, the lower strata of the religions of Greece, were of this character. Man realised that he shared the overflowing life of

nature, and wanted to recognise in joy and in gratitude his kinship with things around him. It is evident that when men are at this stage, such conditions as those of dreaming, trance, and ecstasy are religious, since they give predominance to the sub-conscious faculties, to the life which carries on the necessary natural functions of man, as apart from the life of the intelligence. And we may readily hence understand that an intensification of the sub-conscious life would commonly be accompanied, especially among the abnormally sensitive in nerve, by a non-moral exaltation, often leading to gross debauch, and sensual excesses of an extravagant kind. Indeed, such aberrations from the standard of the ethical life have marked most popular revivals of religion, from the days when the Roman Senate put down with a stern hand the inroads of Oriental mysticism in southern Italy to our own times, when some of the new religious societies of America have superseded the precepts of the Decalogue.

Naturalist religion tends inevitably to decay as man becomes civilised. In the ancient world it survived longest in out-of-the-way places, among the hills of Phrygia or in the recesses of Syria. Thought and human intercourse weaken it. But it leaves behind it a progeny who carry on its ideas at a somewhat different level; it is continued in the lower mysticism and in poetry.

The profound tendencies, rooted in the heart by unnumbered ages of feeling, cannot easily be extinguished. Nor is it desirable that they should. Happiness and enthusiasm, which in man depend in so great a degree on the instinctive feelings, must find an adequate expression; and without some such expression the life grows sad and stagnant. In actual living the sub-conscious faculties of man find their chief employment. In a more articulate way they find a vent and an expression in art, which is nearly always at bottom the ghost of dead religion, or at all events the outgrowth of suppressed religion. And not only art properly so called—painting, music, and poetry,—but also such mixed customs as dancing and personal adornment go back to a religious origin, and preserve for us some fragments of the enthusiasm of the sub-conscious.

(2) Of the religions which belong almost wholly to the conscious nature, the best examples are the monotheism of some of the later philosophical schools of Greece, especially the Stoics, and the Confucianism of China and Japan. Here we have systems of belief and of conduct based upon reason, belonging primarily to the brain, and thence influencing the life. These religions find form in ethical maxims rather than in doctrine; they do not give birth to any elaborate ritual; they are even hostile to art. They seem to those who look on them dry and cold, wanting in

adaptation to human nature, and cut off from all the springs of enthusiasm. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that they are without force in the world. They belong, it is true, to the intellectual, to the few rather than to the many. But in a healthy and normal state of society the intellectual few lead the many, and though the influence of intellect on life cannot be compared with the influence of love, sympathy, or enthusiasm, yet it is a steady and a uniform force. No one has more clearly shown than has Auguste Comte that, in spite of the weakness of human intellect in comparison with the active powers of man, it yet has a directing ability. The rudder does not propel the ship, but in the long-run it decides into which harbour the ship shall come, in spite of the most violent gales. In any organised and civilised society, if there be a clashing between the conscious and the sub-conscious forms of religion, the former will come to the top, and the latter find refuge among the under circles.

(3) Fortunately, however, there are forms of religion which are higher than either of these, and combine what is best in both. These are the religions of super-consciousness, the only example of which that need be considered is Christianity in its many forms and aspects. The essential features of Christianity I have tried to point out elsewhere. It is essentially a religion

of consciousness, since it measures everything in terms of human will, purpose, and personality. It is an anthropocentric as opposed to a pantheistic faith. It teaches that it is by conscious striving that a man must enter into the kingdom of God. It lays the utmost stress on correctness of conduct, on the performance of one's duty to one's parents and one's neighbours. It exhibits the road to heaven as a steep and arduous way, full of difficulties which can only be surmounted by working with full purpose of heart. It makes goodness consist in deed as well as in thought. Its righteousness goes beyond the righteousness of those Jewish Puritans the Pharisees.

But there is also another side to it. It teaches also that without divine aid man cannot advance in the life of religion, that while a good will is the end of preaching, a will cannot make itself good. Progress in the higher life requires two elements : the resolute setting of the will of man upon what is right, and the aiding of man's will by the will of God.

The life of the Spirit does not, according to Christianity, consist in a mere abdication, in paralysis of will and subjection of the intelligence to some outer force ; but in correlation and co-operation in man of what is his own and of the power which is not his. The means is prayer, and the various ordinances of religion, such as the Communion, which are the vehicles of prayer.

The religions alike of the sub-conscious and the conscious have no need of prayer, or at least of prayer in its highest forms, the first because it has to do with what is beneath man, the second because it has no communion save with man. But to supra-conscious religion, prayer is the natural attitude of mind. And by the road of prayer the divine inspiration is constantly passing into human life; so that, to revert to our former comparison, the rays which were above the spectrum of consciousness enter into it more and more fully.

I do not, of course, use the term prayer here in any narrow sense, but as including all the forms of communion with the higher power. Prayer may find articulate expression in words, or it may be an unexpressed emotion. And articulate prayer may have a vast range, from the natural and innocent petition for personal help to the profoundest submission to the recognised will of God. At all times, however, the prayer of a man is the fullest and truest expression of his conscious spiritual life.

CHAPTER IV

THE CLAIMS OF SPIRIT

I

From the days of Plato onwards, the higher teaching, the doctrine of the great thinkers, has been that the inner and spiritual world is the true and eternal element, the world of sense the temporary and evanescent element. The sensuous is but the reflection of the spiritual: those who see with the eyes of sense, but not with the eyes of the spirit, are blind. Those who allow themselves to be dominated by the visible, by that which appeals only to the life of the world, are torpid or dead: those who amid mortal surroundings live the life of the spirit, are truly living.

The view which the Platonists try to justify to the understanding, Christianity has from the first proclaimed, not on grounds of reason, but on grounds of inward perception, and the feeling of values. It has taught that a man who would be worthy of life must look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal;

that a man's life consists not in what he possesses but in what fundamentally he is, that to gain his soul he must be willing to give up all worldly advantage, that he must have faith to dwell among the things of the spirit.

It is from the resistances offered to our energies by the material world that we have learned natural law, and from such experiences our intellects have built up a reasoned system of the world. Our ancestors when in a primitive condition had little notion of natural law; but supposed that the forces of nature and material things had a power of self-determination, possessed something like human free-will. Only as they rose by degrees to the perception of fixed rule and uniformity in nature were they able to order their actions under material conditions, so as to gain effective control of the surrounding world. Only as we in our turn discover the laws of human nature, and the uniformities in our relations to our spiritual environment, can our intellects guide us into appropriate and effectual action in that environment.

In the Middle Ages, men drew a hard-and-fast line. Knowledge in regard to the world of sense, they held, man could gain by the exercise of his natural powers. But knowledge in regard to the unseen world of spirit, and with knowledge, due and suitable action in regard to it, they thought could only be gained through revelation.

And the revelation they supposed to be embodied in a book, or in an organised Church. All that man's intellect could do was to discover the dictates of that book, or that Church; after which his intellect and his will alike were bound to accept such dictation.

But when once criticism fairly set about the task of considering the nature of inspiration and of revelation, this easy resort to an infallible guide became impossible. At the time of the Reformation it was clear to the peoples of northern Europe that many of the teachings, and much of the practise of the Church which claimed to be infallible, were contrary to the light of intelligence and the voice of conscience. For a time the Reformers intrenched themselves behind the refuge of an infallible Bible. But when historic and literary criticism had passed its most rudimentary stage, it became obvious that a book so complex and so wanting in self-consistence could not be infallible—that in fact it was not one book, but a literature. Thenceforward the spirit of man was driven from all shelters into the open sea, and was obliged, willing or unwilling, to go forward.

That all truth in doctrine, and all goodness in action, are the result of divine inspiration we may still believe. But this inspiration does not come into human life as through a transparent medium, but through "a dome of many-coloured glass."

It stands in relation to temporal surroundings, to schemes of philosophy which are dominant, to ancestral methods of conduct, above all to the fixed and inevitable scheme of human nature.

It has to be filtered through a personality, and conveyed in words which were formed only with reference to the visible and tangible. It is only through an analysis of the nature of inspiration and the human faculties on which it acts that we can hope to rise through the temporary and imperfect expression towards the divine thought which the mind of man can constantly approach without ever completely reaching it. Of inspiration and revelation I speak more at length in the next chapter.

At bottom the whole question is one of fact and experience. We have the facts of religion working in the world about us. And we have a series of biographies of all periods in the history of the Church. There is an enormous consensus of testimony. Thousands have testified that when their own powers of action were exhausted, they have been aided and sustained by a spiritual power working in them, raised from despair to hope, from feebleness to efficiency, from pessimism to a free and joyous activity. They have thrown themselves into the river of spirit, sometimes doubting whether they would ever come to the surface; and they have found themselves borne up and carried onward to ends

which seemed beyond their attainment, very often to ends which they had not seen or anticipated. The venture of faith has been justified. Of course, one could not say that this is always the case in the world, though some will say that it is always the case in their own experience. There is risk which has to be incurred; otherwise faith would have in it little merit. And so poor is the courage and the will of man, that however clear may be the recollection of past aid, it yet always does require some strain to put the matter to the proof again. Jesus said, "Every one that asketh receiveth": but men have not believed his word, because they have not recognised the spiritual aid, unless it has carried them exactly the way they wished to go. God will certainly not be dictated to. But the possibility and the actuality of divine aid seems to me as well established by history as any of the regular phenomena of the moral constitution of things. And it takes place not only in the great crises of life but in the small events of every day.

II

The intellectual difficulty lies in the interpretation of the source and the meaning of such aid. Here, beyond question, there is the greatest difference of view between man and man, according to the country, the education and the personal

character of each. Here we have to trust to our intellectual powers, which are very feeble and prone to every kind of illusion and of error. The varieties of religious experience are many; but the interpretations of that experience are infinitely more varied.

There are various paths to union with the divine. The first is the path of asceticism, set forth by Buddhism, and eastern religions generally. These religions teach that all desire is an evil, and only by quenching it can a man attain to peace and rest, that the wants natural to man as man must be thwarted and starved, so that by degrees he may quench the desire of life, and attain, not in one life, but in the course of many lives, to that condition which is called Nirvana, which may be considered, according to the point of view which one takes, as either the cessation of being or absorption in the general life. To the eastern mind the highest phase of life upon earth is passive contemplation of the divine, accompanied by complete indifference to pain and pleasure. The duty to one's fellows is not to inflict upon them any pain, and to encourage them on the road to Nirvana.

This oriental frame of mind has had many echoes in the west. To pass by such Greek sages as are little more than names to us, such as Pythagoras and Empedocles, we find it reflected in some of the many forms of Platonism. Some

Platonists speak of the spirit as imprisoned in the body, and only to be released by mortification of the body. It is probable that this view came into Platonism from Orphism; but Plato and his successors raised all the mysticism which they adopted to a higher level, both ethical and intellectual. This side of Platonism became more and more prominent as the ancient world became weary, and drew towards its dissolution. It passed on into rising Christianity.

The asceticism of monk and hermit in the Christian Church has had much in common with that of the Buddhist saint. In more recent times the pessimistic philosophy of von Hartmann, which regards individual existence as an evil, is closely related to Buddhism. And in the poems of Shelley, one of the least consistent of human beings, one may find traces of asceticism mingled with overflowing joy of life :—

> " He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;
> Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
> And that unrest which men miscall delight,
> Can touch him not and torture not again."

After all, if the world of spirit is one, including individuals, there must lie a truth at the foundation of asceticism, of the practice, even if that practice may often have been defended by false theory. The members of monastic societies, and even solitaries, do serve a function in emphasising

and strengthening the relation between God and man. By rigorously training the body, and by keeping mind and desire away from the things of the world, they widen the connection which unites man to God, and they produce in the world of spirit fresh courses of energy. In ways invisible and often unfathomable they further the divine will. And indeed, if it were otherwise, if all the prayer and devotion of the monastery were merely wasted, poured out in vain, it would be impossible to understand how thousands in all periods, living and reasonable men and women, would have found in the life of the cloister their best happiness, and regarded expulsion thence as the greatest of calamities. When Angélique Arnauld was allowed to follow her wish and become a nun, she could not help dancing for joy. It is by no means only those who have met with misery and disappointment in the world who have found a refuge in the cloister, but thousands of men and women before whom life spread like a pleasant garden. They have chosen what they liked best. The persistency of the monastic impulse, even amid the most modern conditions, and in the most prosperous countries, shows that it meets an enduring need of human nature, is a testimony to the reality of the invisible. No doubt in the Middle Ages the tendency went too far; and no doubt the combination of active service with contemplation is an improve-

ment. But to set aside the whole ascetic tendency as a baseless aberration would be folly. Tennyson says that the thoughts of poets enrich the blood of the world. In the same way the prayers and meditations of the cloister have enriched the life-blood of Christianity.

But with Christian asceticism there has nearly always been mingled something of a second way to the divine, practical philanthropy. In view of the origins of Christianity, and the recorded life of the Founder, it was almost impossible that in his followers there should not be combined with self-denial and contemplation of the divine nature something of care for human happiness. In the biography of the Gospels we find the combination of nights of communion with God and days of faith-healing and active beneficence. The death on the cross may be regarded either as a complete surrender to the divine will, or as a self-sacrifice for the good of mankind. Love to God and love to man were regarded by Jesus as mutually complementary. And the Fourth Evangelist, who so wonderfully comprehended the spirit of his Master, writes that no one can love God who does not also love his brother.

In our days the way of practical benevolence has come so much into the foreground that it has almost obscured the way of contemplation and of the love of God. The religious societies which

cultivate contemplation and the practice of worship are giving way to such as have an active mission in the world. The type of sainthood is becoming more and more practical, the type of Father Damien, the apostle of the lepers, rather than the type of the hermit and the recluse. The thing which beyond other things the Christian Church has to teach the community at present is, that apart from ideals and the service of God, philanthropy will bring no cure to human evils, but even intensify them. We need to reverse the saying of the Evangelist, and to proclaim that he who does not keep God ever in his mind will love his fellow-men to no great purpose. He is likely, in the long run, to do them more harm than good. If he promotes their happiness it will probably be at the expense of others.

There is a third way of approach to the divine, which, however, is necessarily confined to the few. It consists in so deep a love of, and sympathy with, the intellectual side of the natural and the human world as to enter, so to speak, into the thought of the Creator, to rejoice in what is called by Bergson *L'évolution créatrice*, to understand more and more of the inner meaning and relations of the world, both material and human. Whereas asceticism is a decaying cause, the intellectual sympathy with God is becoming more and more possible, as we sound deeper abysses of experience, and learn more and more of the

working of law and of inspiration in the world. As asceticism needs for its supplement practical philanthropy, so this higher philosophy is naturally allied with the pursuit of science, not for the mere rewards which such pursuit may bring, but as an end in itself, the pure love of knowledge and truth.

The world at large little understands or appreciates the devotee of science. It sets him down as an unpractical dreamer, except when from time to time he astonishes it by some brilliant discovery which can be put to practical use. If his devotion renders him, as it often does, a somewhat abstracted husband or inefficient parent, it abuses him for selfishness. The Marthas of the world are always claiming from him a practical co-operation, which he is often unfit to give. Seldom indeed is his life one of prosperity or worldly success. Yet as a class the devotees of science, of truth in nature and in history, are probably as happy as any class of men. Great and even small discoveries of new scientific laws or new keys to history and conduct give them a pleasure which is not only keen but pure, and which entails no reaction. They also "touch God's right hand in the darkness, and are lifted up and strengthened."

Yet another way towards the dominance of spirit is that followed by artists, poets, musicians, when they devote themselves wholly to their

crafts, and undergo the rigorous self-discipline and training which they all involve, in the pursuit of beauty, of harmony, of the embodiment of the ideas revealed to their spirits in painting or statue, in poem or musical composition. As God, by pouring into the world the breath of life, produces men with character and purposes, so the artist creates forms which take their place in the world of sense, revealing what had been only implicit and undefined, and thereby stirring the spirits of men and leading them towards happiness.

III

Since, however, man is an individual, we must consider the matter before us also from the individual point of view of happiness. Men will naturally say that it may be a worthy course to further the spiritual life in the world, but that they want also to see wherein it will further their own ultimate well-being.

It is the weak point of all theories of ethics that the question why a man should postpone his own happiness to the good of the race remains insoluble. It can only be met by an appeal to faith, to the higher nature. The answer of Jesus was, "that ye may be the children of your Father in heaven." The answer of mediæval Christianity was, "that you may secure future happiness in heaven." John Stuart Mill, in utilitarian

despair of finding a sufficient motive, said that anyone who refused to consider others should be treated as a mad dog. All states try, by rewards and punishments, to secure a certain amount of self-sacrifice in the individual; but in western countries the growth of individualism and the chaos in ethics have made such legislation in many matters ineffective. Thus in modern life the man who pursues a life of materialist selfishness often does not meet with obvious punishment.

I am no better prepared than other moralists to provide a self-regarding reason for social conduct. But I think that when society has better organisation something more of discipline will be attempted. Meantime I may observe that a reasoned selfishness is not very common as a ruling principle in life, though an impulsive or emotional selfishness may be. And when we consider the analogies to be found in the world we shall see that reasoned selfishness is decidedly out of place in the biological scheme of things.

A very consolatory reflection, amid the disappointments of life, may be derived from the eternal hopefulness of nature, and of the creative spirit who works through nature. The moment rain stops the earth begins to dry up; no continuance of bad weather at all diminishes the hopefulness with which nature turns to brighter days. If one examines the shrubs and trees in November, one finds that leaves do not drop off

merely because they are decayed; they are pushed off by the buds which are already beginning to form in preparation for the spring of the next year. In the case of healthy human beings, the moment disease has passed its crisis, the powers of new growth and recovery begin to assert themselves. Nature is never weary and never despondent, but always striving towards recovery and new life. The keener our sympathy with nature, the stronger will be the contagion by which nature passes on to us this keen and hopeful frame of mind.

So, if we would be the children of the author of nature, we are urged never to despair, however dark the clouds may be, but to keep doing, always aiming at what is better, and when we fail beginning again. Such constant striving, however it may seem in this or that case to be frustrated, must in the long run tend to produce a better earth, and a nearer approach to heaven, just as the creative spirit, always working in the world, has by degrees produced plants and animals of a higher grade and of greater beauty.

The view maintained in this work is that it is the main end and business of every man to take his due place in the world of spirit. To the laws of that world he owes loyalty. To other citizens of that world he owes consideration and affection. To the Ruler of that world he owes both love and obedience. That by such a course he will reach

his own best happiness is not a thing that can be proved. It must be accepted by that stress of heart and will which is called faith. But if it cannot be proved, it certainly cannot be disproved. In the main conduct, as in most of the urgent decisions, of life a man must take risks. He will learn in the course of living that such ventures of faith justify themselves in practice. And so he will believe that the venture in the quest of eternal life will also justify itself. As St Paul puts it, "If ye live unto the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live." And he will find that if he allows the connection between his spirit and the Divine Spirit to be blocked, whether by actual transgression or by an accumulation of indolence and self-will, his inner life will grow poorer and poorer; so that however he may seem to the world to prosper, he will become in his own eyes contemptible and wretched.

That a man's life consists not in the extent of his possessions, that wealth and outward prosperity have very little relation to happiness, anyone can see who looks a little beneath the surface. If anyone considers who among his friends are really the happiest, he will seldom find that they are the wealthiest and most prosperous. The opposite view is easily recognised as an illusion. Yet there are undoubtedly conditions in the world more favourable to happiness than are

their opposites. Health among the first, and domestic relations of a satisfactory kind, and kinds of work which suit the individual and exercise his powers without overtaxing them. But yet all these together, though they may promote happiness, do not constitute it. Happiness is from within; it is a central fountain of life, which will find easier course when circumstances are favourable; but which will break a way through almost any obstacles. This inner spring is dependent on relations to the spiritual source of life. It rises and falls, is full or runs dry according to laws which none of us can fathom. But the chief condition of it lies in a right relation to the law of our being, in an inward sense that we are pursuing the course which the author of our being intended us to pursue. Happiness in the main depends on the harmony of our personality with such a course; unhappiness, on a divergence from it.

Experience shows that the greatest source of happiness in the world is the fulfilment by individuals of the law of their being, rather than the pursuit of pleasure.

It is so even among insects. In a hive of bees the drones are all eager to have intercourse with the queen when she makes her nuptial flight. One only succeeds, and he perishes in the act; yet he is the happiest of all, and all would gladly change places with him. The workers, unde-

veloped females, seem to find infinite unselfish happiness in storing honey for the hive and tending the grubs which shall develop into bees. It is so among animals. The dog who has any goodness in him does not hesitate for a moment to attack a dog larger than himself, in the service of his master. But the dog is at a high level of the animal world, and he may by love, fidelity, and devotion to his master even be said to enter into the world of spirit, and to attain a happiness greater than any mere indulgence of sense.

I have above spoken of the two instincts of self-expansion and of sex as the primary impulses of man, on the gratification of which happiness naturally depends. On the first of these instincts is based that passion for carrying out the law of one's being of which I have been speaking. On the second is based a man's relation to society. No man can be happy unless he meets with the appreciation of his fellow-men and with the stronger feeling of love from a few. In rare cases he may be called upon to sacrifice both of these to his loyalty to the higher calling. But generally speaking they regulate his conduct. And they cannot be attained without a certain degree of self-subordination to the happiness of others. The man who sacrifices to his own success, duty and the happiness of those about him is not only base, but also in the long run the most miserable of mankind.

CHAPTER V

INSPIRATION AND REVELATION

I

INSPIRATION and revelation are two sides or aspects of the same fact. Each implies the communication to chosen men of impulses coming from that which is super-conscious. I have spoken of this process elsewhere as the communication to man of the divine ideas. But when one thus uses the word ideas, it is necessary to explain that one uses it rather in a Platonic than in a modern sense. One means by it the primary impulses, which are ever coming from God and moulding the world of nature and of man in the direction of the better. Such impulses may take body in many forms, in literature, in art, in great reforms, in noble enterprises. But between inspiration and revelation there is this distinction. When we speak definitely of inspiration we refer mainly to the character and spirit of the messenger who is filled with an impulse from above, and by it carried above the level of ordinary life. And when we speak of revelation we refer primarily to the intellectual fruits of inspiration, the speeches which the inspired man utters, the

treatises which he writes, the belief which he formulates.

A full and warm belief in the value of inspiration and revelation belonged eminently, though of course not exclusively, to the Jewish race. Through all its ancient history, Israel has been the race of inspiration. Prophets arose in generation after generation, speaking in the name of Jehovah, and calling on the people to repent, to remember the loyalty due to the divine ruler, to trust in him with all their hearts, and to keep the law which he had given. Hence arose the Jewish scriptures, which may fairly be called the basis of western religion, the basis on which Christianity built an immortal structure.

Among the Greeks inspiration was far less regarded. Any sort of fanaticism, any claim to a special relation to the divine, was looked on by the Greeks with suspicion, and keenly criticised. In the case of a few of the immortals, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, such claims were allowed by their disciples: but their utterances were so much subordinated to reason and method that they had little of the stirring power of the prophets of Israel. The ancient sacred literature of India and Persia is at a wonderfully high level; but it also is so transfused with meditation as to become rather theosophy than religion. The relations of the Jewish seers to God was so close that they were able to learn and to set forth more of the

divine purpose than the wise men of all the nations. They revealed God as the Greeks discovered man and the world.

Above, in discussing the sub-conscious, the conscious, and the super-conscious in knowledge, and particularly in religion, we have been investigating the psychology of inspiration. But it may be well to retrace here the lines of the subject.

Recent psychology has dwelt, as I think with excessive emphasis, on the part played by dreams in human life. No doubt it is not rare for those whose dreams are of a more persistent and connected kind to learn from dreams much in regard to the part of their being which is unconscious. This is, of course, no new discovery: in all countries and at all ages dreams have been often regarded as a kind of revelation, though seldom of the highest kind. There were in Greece many temples in which invalids slept, in the hope that in dreams the nature of their illness, and perhaps some remedy offered by the gods, might be revealed. In many parts of the Old Testament dreams are spoken of as revealing the sacredness of a locality, or the way to the divine favour, or, in particular, the course of future events. The beginning of Matthew's Gospel is full of dreams, in which specially favoured servants of God are shown what they ought to do, or whither they should go. Belief in heaven-sent dreams has

been one of the strands of which all religions in the past have been made up. The recent treatment of dreams has regarded them as throwing light not upon the nature of duty or divine impulses, but upon the sub-conscious elements in a man's own being, dragging into light hidden reasons for his actions, and enabling him or his advisers to counteract by conscious processes pernicious tendencies.

In my opinion it is easy to make too much of dreams in this connection. Vivid and connected dreams are concomitants rather of disease than of health. The ordinary, well-constituted man may indeed dream, but his dreams are so vague and fleeting, so inconsistent and irrational, that very little indeed can be made of them. When, however, dreams are vivid and persistent, it is natural to seek an explanation of them. Soothsayers of all ages have found one of the most lucrative branches of their trade in the explanation of dreams. Usually they lend themselves to a score of explanations. Some may indicate bodily illness, some mental overstrain, some a great nervous shock. A few, among many, may come through the gate of horn, and give information of a valuable kind, as to the unconscious elements in the personality of the dreamer.

So far as I am able to judge, infinitely more valuable thoughts and impulses come into the mind at the moment of waking than in the

course of dreams. Often it has happened to me to find formed within me at the moment of waking, a conviction or a purpose, which not only had not been present when I went to sleep, but seemed to me quite new. But, in fact, at any time of quiet or meditation, during a solitary walk, in the presence of sea or mountain, when one is recovering from illness, when the mind is withdrawn from the daily cares and troubles of life, one feels rising within one hopes and purposes which sometimes give a new aspect to life. Probably there was never a time when men were less given to quiet and receptivity. The pace of life is always increasing; we rush to constant occupation and perpetual preoccupation; we are always doing something or talking to some one. Hence the aspect of religion is changed; there is more of ritual and ceremony, less of inward and meditative religion. That our ways tend to make our Christianity more superficial, more restless, less serious, can hardly be denied.

William James has spoken of genius as a sudden or abnormal uprising of the unconscious in us. This definition may serve, if by genius we mean not only genius for good, but genius for evil also. The unconscious is a profound sea, on which we float, and its supersession of the conscious may lead to sublime heights of art, of feeling, or of virtue, or may debase us by drawing us back towards the savagery from which we have emerged.

Inspiration in religion is what Matthew Arnold called genius for godliness, a pouring out in our lives of the impulses of the Power that makes for righteousness. This we may most clearly see in the case of what one may call the classical examples of inspiration, the Hebrew prophets. At times when the national life was sinking to a low ebb, when the Jewish nation was reverting to the level of the Canaanites around, they came to call the nation to repentance, to renewed worship, to the hope of a better future.

Primarily, they were preachers or proclaimers of the need of righteousness, of a just, pure, and noble life for the nation and the individual. But they went beyond mere exhortation to the practice of good. Their inspiration, so to speak, overflowed into the way of thought and intelligence. In accord with the general feeling of the time they declared, in the first place, that righteousness led to national prosperity and a high place among the nations. So far they preached for all time. But they also taught that in the individual life righteousness led to outward prosperity and success. This was far more doubtful doctrine; and in the book of Job we have a magnificent protest against its universal truth, though even Job comes to a "happy ending," and the patriarch recovers his worldly possessions. So the growing conviction that the noblest life is not necessarily the most prosperous forced

inspiration to take a less individual course, and to predict for the nation a happy time in the future, when it should become a holy people, and rule in peace and plenty among the nations.

Hence arose the great apocalyptic literature of later Israel, which led in turn to the preaching of the kingdom of heaven by John the Baptist, and in an infinitely nobler form, by Christ himself. And thence, again, arose the great mediæval teaching of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory, which dominated the minds of our ancestors, and still to a great degree dominates the minds of nations influenced by Christianity.

The point on which I want to insist is that the root of prophecy was an impulse or urging arising from the unconscious. It was a call proceeding from the great Ruler of the unconscious world, a divine idea which tended to the formation of great ideals in a race chosen to lead and instruct mankind, and to the raising of the level of humanity.

The comprehension of the idea by the Prophets and their attempt to give it intellectual form, were always very imperfect. Even when the inspiration was of the purest and highest type, the words and deeds in which it took concrete form and expression were the words and deeds of an individual; for of the inspiration of societies I am not at present speaking; that I must deal with later. The individual, then, who was the

channel of inspiration had to give it expression through his concrete personality. Hence, endless perversion and adulteration. The moral nature of the prophet was not, could not be, perfect, but was humanly imperfect and one-sided. However much he might strive to set it aside and to be a mere mouthpiece of the inspiration, he could not do so wholly. Necessarily, he was under the dominion of what Bacon calls the idols, the idols of the cave and of the tribe. As the worship of Jehovah had in Israel constantly to contend against the worship of inferior deities, so the word of Jehovah in the spirit of the prophet had to struggle against a host of idols, desires, prejudices, personal feelings. He would often retire into the wilderness to starve and mortify the personal bias; but even so, wherever he went he carried with him his personality, with all its weaknesses and with all its strength. He would even so find that—

> "Time, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity."

But what seems to a modern mind even more disastrous to the purity of inspiration is the limitation of intellectual outlook. The prophet's knowledge of nature and of man was very imperfect; even of the social and political world beyond the reach of his own observation and experience it was so small that he would constantly

be drawing false inferences and making hasty generalisations. When we think of these things it may well seem a marvel that after all there is much which belongs to all time, much which only needs resetting to be a light to the modern world. That this should be the case proves the fundamental reality of the inspiration, proves that the prophet was really in contact with a vast region of the unconscious, underlying the being of nations and of individuals, a world of ideas generally dawning on the world and destined to dawn upon it in the future. As Æneas saw in Hades the souls which should animate those hereafter to be born, so the prophet saw something of the underlying forces which should gradually inform the world.

It was but natural that with this deeper view within him, he should have felt able to foretell actual events in the world,—the fall of Tyre, the ruin of Babylon. But naturally, when he came to speak of actual events, he would be liable to many misleading tendencies, he would speak of that of which he had little knowledge. So his definite predictions were very often falsified. And when he spoke of what was far removed from human knowledge, the creation of the world, the course of the stars, and the like, he would naturally only speak in what seem to us parables and images.

In Jewish prophecy we find the phenomena of inspiration in their simplest and most intelligible

form. But all inspiration, that of the Christian origins, that of the Catholic Church, that of great modern prophets, is of the same general character. It implies a source in the unconscious, and for all the nobler kind of inspiration in what I have called the super-conscious. It is all liable to be perverted by selfishness, prejudice, hate. And it has always to be expressed in terms of the intellectual equipment of the age. It is of all degrees of value and trustworthiness from the almost worthless to the sublimest efforts of genius, or to such utterance of supersensual truth as many of us might accept as infallible.

The predominance of revelation in Israel has had extraordinary effects, both for good and evil, in the course of Christianity. At the time of the rise of Christianity, the Jews had become convinced of the perfection and infallibility of their sacred books, an infallibility not only spiritual, but literal. No reader of the New Testament can fail to observe with what complete confidence the Jewish sacred writers are cited. Often, indeed, their words are misinterpreted; but that they are liable to error seems hardly to be hinted, except where they were emended by Christ himself. The Christians took over from the Jews the doctrine of the infallibility of scripture, and before long certain of the early Christian writings were added to the Jewish canon, and shared with it the robe of infallibility.

I have already tried to show that inspiration belongs not only to the unconscious, but also to the conscious elements in man. It may act, not by superseding the normal powers of intelligence and action, but by raising them to a higher level, and imparting to them a greater force. Genius may be shown, not by an uprising from the unconscious, but by an intensification of the conscious. It may be exhibited by the man of science in a profounder vision into the realities of nature and human society, as well as by the highly-trained artist in rising above the level of his previous work, or by the statesman who succeeds by pains and thought in really adapting legislation to the natural instincts of a country. It seems to be at bottom insight; and the insight may be a result of the fullest working of the natural powers of a man, as well as of a sudden and unforeseen illumination.

II

One of the greatest, perhaps the very greatest, of all the difficulties which modern Christianity has to face, is how to deal with religious inspiration. Theoretically, the distinctions are clear. We have to discern between the true inner illumination and the faulty and imperfect expressions to which it gives rise. The former is not easily tested, and can only be satisfactorily judged by the test of fruits. The latter is subject

to the ordinary intellectual and critical investigations of mankind. But the great difficulty is that the followers of the inspired person do not easily admit this distinction. His inspiration and its expression are to them all one; and they think that any one who ventures to criticise the expression must also deny the inspiration. The adherents and followers of the prophet will have all or nothing. Whatever he says must be accepted bodily, and any criticism is regarded as an attack upon the genuineness of the inspiration. Hence arise the interminable controversies as to the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible and the Church.

In the light of reason, nothing could seem more incongruous than any doctrine of infallibility. For everywhere, among things to be known, we find a multitude of probabilities of error to one of truth. The wisest man will hold erroneous views as to a thousand subjects; and his whole life may be devoted to a gradual elimination of what is false, and a pursuit of what is true.

The belief in infallibility, whether in the Bible, the Church, or any other authority, is obviously not based upon reason, but upon an emotion of veneration. Of course, it may be blindly accepted from custom or from social influence. But when it is more reasonably held, it may be based upon experience. It will often happen that, when a man is following his own opinion, there breaks in

upon him a voice from some high source, spoken or written, which at once carries him away, which makes him feel that his own opinion is superficial, poor, and worthless, and that the new light is of infinitely greater value. He follows this light, and finds that it has led him to truer thought and nobler action than he could by himself have reached. If this has happened often, his view of the inspired voice will rise higher and higher, until he follows it without hesitation or demur. He may well speak of it as infallible. But what he really means, by the phrase, is not that he thinks it wholly incapable of error, but that he thinks it far more likely to be right than any view which he could form by the exercise of his own judgment. The infallibility will be limited, no doubt, to special fields; for no man can deny the truths which he learns by actual experience in the world at the bidding of an authority however venerable. But in matters beyond sense and daily experience, he will rely on an authority which he has tried and not found wanting.

An intellectual apprehension of the nature of inspiration, revelation, and infallibility is not extremely difficult. But when an individual man, or a society which is also in a sense an individual, tries to guide the course of life and belief amid the facts and impulses which arise out of inspiration, there arise the greatest difficulties.

Partly these come of the differences of temperament and tradition and education, partly of the varied experiences met in the course of living. I may glance at a few of the more fundamental difficulties, and the more usual way of meeting them.

One method of solution of the general problem was brought into strong light by the French Modernists in recent times. It lay in the distinction between doctrine and history in inspired literature, especially in the Bible. The Modernists accepted the claim of the Roman Curia to infallibility in the matter of doctrine, or dogma as they preferred to call it. The Church, they held, had a right of divine origin to form organisation, to prescribe rites and ceremonies, and even to establish dogmas in regard to moral and spiritual truth. But in matters of history it had no right by authority to impose on the faithful any particular view. The history recorded in the Bible, and the history of the Church, must be judged in the light of recognised canons of historic research. The distinction is luminous, and it has been put forth with remarkable lucidity by M. Loisy. Unfortunately the Roman Church would not, and in fact could not, accept it; the Church claimed the right to fix and to interpret religious history just as clearly as it claimed the right to formulate doctrine. And indeed, to draw a sharp line between dogma and the history of

doctrine, Rome held to be impossible. Moreover, it is clear that if once we apply our critical faculties in the field of religious history, we must needs apply them also in the field of religious psychology, and so, in fact, to the very basis of all doctrine.

In the Middle Ages, by the great schoolmen, a broad line was drawn between secular knowledge, in regard to which sense and experience sufficiently inform us, and religious knowledge, which comes wholly from revelation. But however strongly the line was drawn, it could not be wholly satisfactory or final, since in many fields of knowledge secular knowledge or science clashed with the revelation contained in the Bible. In prosecuting and condemning Galileo, the Church claimed supremacy in the field of astronomy; and if astronomy fell within her domain, it became hard to say what department of science fell outside it.

Since in more recent times methods almost as rigorous as those of physical science have been applied in the field of psychology and sociology, those studies have fallen more definitely into the class of natural knowledge. And since psychology is usually regarded as the basis of religious knowledge, no kind of doctrine can hope wholly to escape the clutches of criticism.

A distinction which may be regarded as a parallel to the mediæval distinction between secular and religious knowledge, which may,

indeed, almost be considered as a translation of it, is still possible, if we adhere to the activist or pragmatist scheme of thought. This is the distinction which I have tried, rather by suggestion and analogy than by strict logic and definition, to draw between the oxygenic and the nitrogenic elements of life. Impulse, energy, initiative, moral purpose, belong to the primal active principle of our being, and may well be compared to oxygen. Resistances which impede or limit that energy, the physical world, organised society, the experiences of practical life, all tend to direct and control it. From the interplay of the two elements arises the world of knowledge and the world of conduct. The active principle is mainly dependent for energy and even for direction on the inflow from the unconscious, on inspiration. The passive or resistant element is there, ever limiting and diluting, but in it we do not trace any direct inspiration, though it may constantly be the cause of the realisation of inspiration.

We have thus, in a manner, two worlds, which theologians have called the world of grace and the world of nature. To the former inspiration naturally belongs; it is the country of the divine ideas, the kingdom of heaven of the Lord's Prayer. In it the will of God is ever done. And the highest hope of the Christian is in some degree or some respect to produce an image of that world in the visible and sensible frame of

things. This latter world is that called in the Gospels the kingdom of this world. Here is the realm not of ends but of means; here science rules, and all things, from the planets downwards, move in regular course according to ascertainable laws.

Between the two realms there is a debatable frontier, which runs through the region of personality, personality which may by grace be raised to an indefinite height, or may by conformity to evil be infinitely degraded. It is for the personality to judge of the pure inspiration by its kindredship to the divine ideas. And it necessarily falls to science and experience to judge of the outward expressions of inspiration, to separate them if possible from their prime source, even it may be in some cases to find for the idea an expression more suitable to advanced knowledge and more refined feeling.

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I

THERE are two ways of approaching the subject of ethics. The first may be called the static way. It approaches the subject from the outside, and tries to order in regular series our duties to ourselves, our family, our nation, to arrange their hierarchies and to reconcile their clashings. This has been the usual way of approach in the past. But there is a second way, which we may call the dynamic, which regards men not as external phenomena, but as centres of force, developing from within. In following this method we follow lines which are really psychological, not contenting ourselves with the surface view of things, but digging downwards towards the ultimate springs of action, and trying to estimate the forces which have brought into existence, and which sustain, the visible activities of the world and of mankind.

It is clear that this latter way of approaching the subject of Christian ethics is that suited to the present work. In every country the accepted code of ethics is the result of forces, good and

evil, which have played upon the national life. The mere fact that such codes exist and maintain themselves shows that they must have relative merit; but they are never perfect, indeed usually are very far from perfection. But to change them radically and suddenly is very difficult, unless in times when society has had rude shocks, or a great moral awakening. But what is possible is to examine them in a reasonable way. And it is the duty of every one to do what he can towards performing the duties laid upon him by the general ethical feeling, and to try to raise the standard where it is low or perverted.

Leaving out of account the religions of India and China, all the great religions which have arisen in Europe and the Near East have represented doing the will of God as the sum of morality. It is scarcely necessary to cite passages from the sacred books of Judaism and Christianity to prove that those two religions take up this attitude since the Jewish Psalms, and the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament are full of exhortations to do the will of God, and of descriptions of the goodness and the happiness of those who do so. In the Koran the duty of submitting to, and of promoting the divine will is, if possible, even more prominent. And in the only other religion which has had much vogue in Europe, that of the Stoic philosophers of Greece and Rome, the sum of virtue is represented as consisting in the

conformation of one's life and purposes to the world order, which is the outward manifestation of the divine principle in the world.

But although all religions are alike in accepting this ultimate principle, they approach it from different sides, and vary greatly in their views as to the practical way of its realisation. In Islam, the great stress is laid on dutiful submission to what is ordained by the divine will. In Stoicism also, submission is the chief duty of man, though this religion of the ancient world lays more stress than any of the Semitic religions on the intellectual element. To learn by thought and contemplation what is the order of the universe to which man has to conform is put in the forefront. In the Jewish religion the stress is laid more on emotion and action, on love of God and righteousness of life. But it must be observed that in the Wisdom books, Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, and the Wisdom of Solomon, the intellectual element is very prominent, a fact which is too often overlooked by Christians.

It is evident that as man has a threefold nature, intellectual, emotional, and volitional, the subject of the Divine Will may be approached from each if these sides. A man has to learn what is the will of God, he has to admire and to love it, and he is able to direct his purposes and endeavours in such a way as to promote it in the world around. And it makes the greatest difference to

his religion which of these lines of approach is with him primary, and which only secondary.

But men do not approach the Divine Will from without, as they approach phenomena in the visible world, but from an inner impulse which works within and through them. The ground of the whole universe, so far as we can discover it, is a constantly working energy which has by degrees moulded the world to what it is, an impulse to life and activity, which is discovered in the life of plants and animals, and still more in the activities and energies of men. It works ever in the direction of the ideal,—ideal beauty in the case of nature, ideal truth and virtue in the human world. But this ideal is approached but slowly through long ages of striving; it is not easily attained. There are constant hindrances, and forces continually opposing. Why evil exists we can no more discover than why we ourselves exist. To deny the existence of evil may be attempted by a paradoxical philosophy; but no sane person would really take such a view. Every day and all day we are struggling against evil, against ugliness and falsehood and sin, and we know that we should never get the better of them but for the power which works within us, which we are able, if we choose, to defy and disobey, but which all the time we feel to be a better inspiration.

The supreme task of every man in the world

is to learn what is good and what is evil, to love the good and hate the evil, to do the good and avoid the evil.

To approach the subject of conduct from the side of observation and intelligence, to discover the nature of good and evil action, has been in all ages the task of moral philosophy, ever since the greatest of iconoclasts, Socrates, exposed remorselessly the hollowness and insufficiency of the notions of good and evil accepted by the people of Athens. His chief task was to show that this superficial code was self-contradictory and impossible to justify to the reason. And a great series of philosophers, following in his steps, approached the questions of good and evil in a logical and metaphysical way, some with greater and some with less success.

In his well-known *Essay on Lord Bacon*, Macaulay has contrasted the results of the moral philosophy of the schools with those of the experimental science of modern times. The former he contemns as empty verbiage ; the latter he praises as a continuous attempt to minister to the comfort of human beings, to the multiplication of the enjoyments and the diminution of the sufferings of life. Of course, no one could maintain that science has not largely succeeded in this purpose, especially medical science. But few people who reflect, with the memory of recent years and the facts of modern life fresh

in their minds, would venture to regard the progress of physical science as a panacea for the woes of humanity. We have seen too much of the perversion of science to purposes of slaughter and destruction, too much of its insufficiency to raise the level of real happiness, to believe that it is capable by itself of bringing in an ideal state of society. And on the other side we see the absurdity of condemning moral philosophy because it is not progressive in the sense in which physical science is progressive. We can greatly change our physical environment; but human nature changes but very slowly, and the ethical ideas and inspirations of the great moralists of all ages are full of value and of instruction for us. In every age there are voices which bid us aim not only at comfort but at ideal good; and if those voices were silenced, the world would soon begin to retrogress towards savagery. Science, as such, is quite as ready to further the schemes of devils as the divine ideas. A good man will use the discoveries of physical science to help his fellow-men; but a bad man will use those discoveries to destroy them. And the mass of mankind, who are neither conspicuously good nor conspicuously bad, will simply use the conveniences of life as they multiply, without being in any serious way the better and happier, or the worse and more degraded, in consequence of them. On the whole, unless used in accord-

ance with the laws of God and man, they tend to produce that restlessness and discontent, that drifting away from old anchorages without finding new ones, which is so marked a feature of our age.

In a high degree the ethical philosophers purify the blood of the world, check growing fanaticisms, show the reasonableness of goodness, encourage love of purity, of duty, and of honour.

But the great defect of all systems of ethics based on reason and contemplation is that they comparatively seldom lead to vigorous action. Psychology easily explains this when it shows that by its very nature contemplative thought is an impediment to action. Thought can only come in when action is delayed and thwarted. And in the same way thought is hostile to emotion, which is the element which gives energy and force to action. For such reasons ethical philosophy must always influence the educated few rather than the many. In an age like ours when democracy has become far more powerful, and even claims universal sway, it is exceedingly hard for even the soundest thinkers to gain power over the motive forces of the nation. They may speak most reasonably, but they have no way of gaining influence. The mass of mankind have no time to listen to reason, and no wish to listen to it, if feeling or interest urge them in another direction. Hence, although ethical philosophy can never

become wholly powerless, since it is or ought to be based on fact and reality ; and although it may often be able to restrain a definitely immoral tendency in conduct, yet it is obliged to pass on the task of leading popular opinion to some of the various enthusiasms, religious and social, which have more hold on the conscience and the heart.

Most modern schemes of ethics are in a greater or less degree pervaded by the utilitarian principle. This is a natural result of the dominance in thought of the methods of physical science. The most obvious and simple way of judging of actions is to consider their consequences ; and in that way one can find definite evidence for and against them. Ever since the time of Bentham, utilitarian reasoning has been more and more in use in matters of law and legislation. But the great difficulty and danger of utilitarian reasoning, outside a very narrow field, is that by an inevitable tendency it is led to assign most weight to what is obvious and insistent, what can be clearly set forth, what can be with some accuracy weighed and measured. It is not that the principle of utilitarianism leads necessarily to this result : but it is a result which it is almost impossible to avoid in practice. One may take the word utility in a lower or higher, a more materialist or more spiritual way. Taking it at its highest, the useful is the same as the ethic-

ally good. But if we so read utility, the introduction of it into the reasoning does not help: it is a mere change of words. But it is inevitable that the desire to give clearness and practical value to his conclusions, must draw the utilitarian constantly in the direction of the material and the obvious. Man's need of food and of clothing, of a comfortable home and reasonable recreation, is so clear, that such immaterial and imponderable things as religion and, for that matter, happiness itself, are likely to be undervalued, or even overlooked. It was simply by giving way to this tendency that Bentham reached such definite results. Anyone who denied his scale of utilities would necessarily give up his system, which no doubt had its value in questions of law and legislation, but had little value in the more complicated conduct of daily life. Even John Stuart Mill, for all his noble ideals, was through his early training made a victim to the same tendency, and was frequently led into sophistry, especially in that astoundingly one-sided work, *The Subjection of Women.*

It is sometimes said that the great precept of Christianity, "Ye shall know them by their fruits," adopts the utilitarian principle. And in a sense it does so. It sanctions the appeal to experience and fact for moral principles. But it avoids the great danger of utilitarian ethics by retaining the ideas of good and evil. It does not think of

fruits as useful, but as good or bad, sound or corrupt. No one, according to Christianity, is saved by merely giving intellectual assent to ethical teaching, but by practising it in the world.

The kingdom of heaven opens to those who not only know but do the will of God. If we know the will of God and love it, we shall certainly do it. But the two roads of knowing and loving start differently, and in most of their course are independent.

Most of great religions of the world have started from authority. Judaism has an ordered and authoritative exposition of ethics in the Pentateuch, Islam in the Koran. These codes are vastly superior to the mere customary and tribal morality which they superseded; they represent a sudden raising of the ethical standard. Most people would allow that the Mosaic code marked a great advance on the current morality of the heathen nations of Canaan, the tribes whom Joshua subdued. That the code of Mohammed also marked an advance on the religion of the tribes of Arabia is less generally realised. Many people are so shocked at one particular institution of Islam, polygamy, that they are blinded to the excellence of many sides of the religion. But the historians who have studied the origin of that religion have highly estimated its moral value. And travellers in the Near East who have come

into contact with Mohammedans always speak highly of the character of many of them. In the history of Islam, as in that of Christianity, there have been frequent reformations, as sages and saints have turned back from the corruption around them to the purity of the pristine faith. And as J. H. Newman has well observed, we cannot wholly deny the inspiration of a religion which has been so firm a bond of society and so greatly promoted brotherly feeling among believers. There have been times in the history of the world when the Mohammedan states were superior to the Christian alike in ethics and in intellectual enlightenment. Nevertheless, both Judaism and Islam are, by the very fact that they are religions of authority, and so incapable of conforming to the intellectual and social changes in their surroundings, put out of court as religions of the future.

Christianity is also, in a measure, a religion of authority, since it has sacred books and definite organisations. But it differs from Judaism and Islam, in that what is laid down by authority is not a detailed code of practices, but the assertion of principles and ideals. Very often, as indeed in Central Africa at the present time, this fact puts the higher religion at a disadvantage as compared with the lower. But Christianity has after all the enormous advantage that it can change, can evolve in the direction of the ideal. It is free

from the bondage of the letter, and free to take in the fresh revelations of the Divine Spirit.

II

The Founder of Christianity not only laid down the principle that beliefs must be judged by their fruits, but also repeatedly showed how a consideration of the facts of nature and of human society can enlighten us as to the will of God. He constantly compares the facts of the life of the spirit to those of the visible world. Such comparisons are no mere illustrative analogies, but the result of a marvellous insight, which saw how the laws of the universe are fundamentally the same in the domain of the visible and the invisible.

I may cite a few of the many sayings of the Saviour which are of this kind. "When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather, for the heaven is red. And in the morning it will be foul weather to-day, for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven, but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." Among city dwellers the face of the heavens does not attract much attention; but anyone used to going abroad at all times and seasons may find constant analogies between it and the dealings of God with men. If one regards sun and rain, wind and storm, from a merely unsympathetic point of view, one may find little but

disappointment; but if one looks at them with patience and endurance, they may become a school of hope and a constant inspiration of conduct. In another place the Saviour reads the parable of the fig-tree. "When her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh." And again, "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." The kingdom of heaven is frequently spoken of, not as a cataclysm suddenly revealed, but as a state of society which grows naturally. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field." Ultimately it is the same power, which brings the plant out of the seed, which guides societies in the way to a nobler life, and which urges individuals to do something to promote the working of the divine will.

As we have a far wider knowledge of natural law than existed at the time of the origin of Christianity, we might expect that the field from which such analogies as these are drawn would be in our time vastly increased. And this is certainly the case. Wordsworth, for example, is always watching nature and finding in it hints of moral and spiritual truths. Since Wordsworth wrote, the hurry and stress of modern life has

made the discernment of the spiritual in the natural less possible; but some writers, such as Maeterlinck, carry on the same line of thought.

As regards the deducing of ethical principle from surveys of history, we are obviously at a great advantage as compared with the Jewish teachers of Christianity. For them real objective history, the tale of the rise and decay of nations and states, hardly existed; they saw the past through a mirage of national prejudice; and the myth-making tendency was still dominant. Before us now there lies an almost infinite series of views into the past, in which the consequences of national virtues and national sins are written large for our edification. Not, of course, that it is ever possible to deduce principles of action, individual or social, from the mere contemplation of past history. Views of history cannot give us ideals; but when we have before us the ideals, history can instruct us with infinite wisdom in what ways these ideals may best be attained, and how the hindrances to them may be removed. But in the simple minds of the first Christians such perspectives did not exist; only in the history of the Jewish race they saw the lines of good and evil drawn in harsh outline, with little light and shade.

It is by analogy and by parable, rather than by any regular reasoning, that the Saviour proceeds when he maps out the ways of conduct. No

doubt he accepts the ten commandments and the current rules of social conduct. Sometimes, as when he speaks of divorce, he deliberately amends them in virtue of his personal inspiration. He does not treat the Jewish law of conduct as final or infallible. Mere external rules of action he treats so lightly that most hearers of his sayings do not realise that he conformed in practice to the commands of the Pentateuch. For example, there can be no doubt that, like all Jews, he had a strong repulsion to the eating of animals technically unclean, yet most Christians have no scruple in eating such, and do not realise how far they therein depart from the mind of their Master. He taught the unimportance of the merely external so effectively that, so far as I know, there is no Church which tries strictly to mould the daily life so as to conform to his. It was, he taught, not that which affected the life from the outside which raised or debased a man, but that which came from the heart, and so moulded the mind and the body.

Thus his appeal was not to any code, nor to any system of ethics, but to the spirit. And in a way which cannot be mistaken he founded his ethics on inner impulses, on two emotions which he laid at the root of all goodness,—first, love of God; and second, love of man. But of these he regarded the former as by far the more important; love of man, however much it might be essential to the due tone of intercourse between man and

man, was after all only a consequence and corollary of the love of God. A man should love God with every power of his nature, mind and heart and will, to the very utmost of his powers; but it would be enough if he loved his neighbour as himself.

No one has so clearly and eloquently expounded these phrases as the author of *Ecce Homo!* He shows that in the love of God is included the love of the divine element which exists in every man. It is because men are children of the same Father in heaven that they are in the highest sense brothers. The love of God kindles a flame which becomes an enthusiasm of humanity, a fire never extinguished, because however low a man or woman may fall, however they may sink into the ocean of crime or the morass of swinishness, they can never wholly destroy the divine element within them. And the divine element is that which Christians should love with every power of their being; and which they would wish to rescue and redeem at any cost.

There could not be a greater contrast than exists between a love which contains so much of the divine and the ideal, and such love as commonly exists in the world, which often satisfies philanthropists, and which has no doubt led to much practical beneficence, the love which is content with improving the external conditions of life, providing better food, better houses,

lighter hours of work, and not troubling about a better condition of spirit. No doubt much or most of the improvement of visible conditions has been the result of the activities of really Christian natures, who have seen that tolerable conditions make the life of the spirit easier, while dirt and hunger tend to quench it. But no man who had anything of the spirit of Christ would be content with reforms which only touch the outside of life.

Christian ethics are based upon two great facts or laws of psychology, which hold everywhere. The first of these is that life works from within outwards, not from without inwards. The second is, that the springs of action are far more easily moved by emotion than by reasoning. Not, of course, that emotion necessarily leads to good action. Indeed, history shows that a life full of energy and success may owe its impulse to private ambition, to covetousness, or even to an unquenchable hatred. Wherever there is a possible good to be attained, there is a possible evil to be wrought. But if we assume with Christ that love is better than hate, that it is our business in the world to promote good and resist evil, then the conformity of his teaching as to the ways to accomplish these purposes to the ultimate laws of human nature makes Christianity an intensely practical religion.

The practical basis of Christian ethics is most

definitely set forth in the saying that if a man is anxious to do the will of God, he will know whether his ethical principle is good or bad. Here we have the clearest antithesis to the way of the moral philosophers who seek, whether by a setting forth of metaphysical principle, or by use of the utilitarian method, to work out schemes of virtue. And the Christian teaching is thoroughly sound and scientific, if we grant the activist principle of life, if we hold that human action is from within outwards. If action can only be vigorous, and in a higher sense successful, when it is in accord with the impulse of the general life, and the tendency of the Power that makes for righteousness; if action precedes and dominates thought, rather than thought action, then we see clearly that right doing will cause right thinking. It is in the turning of the scales of will that thought is born; and if the scales are rightly turned, the thought will be right.

No doubt this view needs some guarding. For it cannot be held that well-meaning in itself will lead to right action; every one knows how often good intention accompanies foolish and pernicious action. By the phrase, "being willing to do the will of God," the Saviour means something far less superficial and obvious than having good intentions. He means being in the depths of the heart at one with the divine will, having purposes in conformity, not with mere benevol-

ence and good nature, but with those divine ideas which are ever working beneath the surface of human life. This is a state not to be easily or quickly attained, only to be approached by long self-discipline and striving,—in a word, by attaining to the love of God. As love of friend or neighbour will greatly enlighten our eyes as to their character and disposition, unless perverted by unworthy elements, so the love of God will lead to a knowledge of the character and purposes of God, and so to the highest ethical level.

But it is clear that mankind in general live at a lower level than this, which one may call the "oxygenic" kind of life. We stumble along as best we can through the swamps and deserts of life; we do not fly above it. And therefore, in ordinary practice, we do not reach first principles. The consideration of the consequences of action; principles accepted by the society in which we live, or by any Church of which we are adherents; natural kindly feeling, may all serve us, not as ideal guides, but as signposts of which it is wise to take account. But the ideal is still there; and the nearer we come to it the better for our higher life.

CHAPTER VII

THE DIVINE FATHER

God and Human Personality

I will sketch the implications of such views as I have above suggested, upon religious belief as to God, and Christ, and the Communion of Saints. But first I will try to show that such views have been the essential Christian belief from the very first, though they have been overlaid by many temporary forms and expressions.

God is the source of all things, visible and invisible, and the Father of men, and in a higher sense the Father of Christ. As transcendent, God is the originator and sustainer of life, and of all the conditions of life. His eternal working has led mankind to the assumption of those conditions, those *forms*, as Kant puts it, which make perception and experience possible, that is to say, space as the condition of a visible and material universe, time as the condition of the successive manifestations of life. Thus has been prepared the framework through which the divine energy works.

Of course, the ancient cosmological idea of the Babylonians and the Hebrews that God at a

definite time brought order out of chaos and created the ancestors of the existing races of plants and animals, has passed into the realm of mythology. We can now look back through almost infinite ages, and see how, through the constant working of an inner power, by the process of evolution, living things gradually came into being, and grew less and less ungainly and crude, until at last they became a world full of beauty and charm. But the manner of becoming makes no difference as to the eternal source. We even freely use the word Creator, though the meaning we attach to it is very different from the meaning in which it was used by those who formulated early beliefs. And God, as the fountain-head of life and energy, as the source of the striving of all things to fulfil the law of their being, stands on an immeasurably higher plane than the great artificer of the ancient religions who made order out of chaos at a definite moment of history.

But modern religion turns more and more from the author of the world to the immanent Deity, the God with whom men can have spiritual communion, who stands in contact, actual or possible, with the spirits of men; the creator of things invisible. Mankind has learned to recognise that there exists, in and around us, an infinite well-spring of energy which works not in defiance of, but through, the wills of men. That energy

is like a stream flowing through a thirsty land which can only yield its fruit when irrigated; the human will is the sluice-gate through which, when it is opened, the fertilising water flows into each field. But we are all very much under the sway of sense. So, whereas no cultivator remains ignorant of the source of the supply of the water he needs, many of us are ignorant or unheeding of the source whence comes into our lives the divine blessing of spiritual power. "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." The recognition of divine help, of favour and grace, has given rise to the higher religions, each of which interprets it in a different way, usually in close connection with its own historic origin.

This is a true view of the relation of God to man; but it is a one-sided and incomplete view. For God is not a giver only, nor man a receiver only. Man is not a mere parasite: for it is one of the surest laws of the living world that any being which is merely parasitic begins at once to shrivel and degenerate. Man can give to God, as well as take from him. He does so by means of that marvellous power of volition, of self-determination, which is one of the fundamental facts of the universe. Every time that man puts himself on the side of God, and acts according to the will of God, he strengthens that will. The spiritual world being a whole, and all the

parts inter-connected, no motion can be set up in any part of it but the results spread outwards, as the ripples in a river spread outwards when a stone is thrown into it. Thus no man can work on the side of goodness but he increases the force of goodness in the world, and makes it easier for all other men and women to do what is right. We see clearly every day that right doing in the world is a contagious power, and helps right doing; and we may believe that that which takes place in the visible world is paralleled and reinforced by that which takes place in the invisible world which lies beneath what is visible.

Thus there is a partnership between God and man in the realm of conduct. God inspires man with the desire to do what is righteous, and gives him strength for carrying out his desire, strength in the inner man. And man in return, by a willing obedience to the divine impulse, fortifies that impulse and helps to moralise the world. And when conduct aimed at the ideal brings upon a man suffering, as it so often does, the power of God lightens the suffering and enables a man to bear it. Nay, more, though this is a doctrine which can only be accepted by that strain on the will which is called faith, God even suffers with man, bears a part of his burden. With human affliction he is afflicted, and over the deeds of courage, self-sacrifice, self-control, which are the life-blood of the world, we may believe that he rejoices.

If in previous paragraphs I have seemed to undervalue personality by not speaking of it as an eternal and indestructible monad, surely I make amends by suggesting for it a magnificent part in the active world of humanity and of conduct. I do not represent it as living to itself like a beautiful flower, but as passing like the flower into the stage of fruit, as forming itself in order that it may be a support and help of God in the everlasting strife with evil. To some this subordination to the unseen may appear harsh, and too severe for most men to appreciate. But such a view overlooks the fact that by the very constitution of the universe all happiness comes to creatures when they fulfil the law of their being, and further life. The crudest delights, such as enjoyment of food and drink, are of this kind, as are the delights of sex, the ultimate source of most of the world's rapture. It is the same in the higher sphere. It is of the very essence of the spiritual world that by doing the will of God we should ever grow more vigorous, more healthy, and more happy ; and by opposing it we should be stunted and blighted.

This is the essence of the Christian faith as set forth in the earliest documents of Christianity, and as embodied, often in grossly materialised and even grotesque forms, in the popular beliefs of mediæval and modern Europe. There are aberrations from it to the right and the left,

strange crystallisations of it in creeds and articles. But there have arisen at intervals thinkers and mystics who have ever tended to renew its hold on the life of the world.

Jewish and Greek Conceptions of God

The tribal religion of the Jews recognised as the source of divine activity Jehovah or Yahveh, the ancient patron of the race. He in origin was not very different from the gods of the surrounding nations, as in origin mankind did not greatly differ from the ancestors of the tribes of apes. But the good providence of God, working in and through the inspired prophets of Israel, gradually refined and exalted what may be called the God-consciousness of the people, until we have the wonderfully exalted and intimate sense of God which is embodied in the Psalms, some of which express in a way which has never been surpassed, the feelings of awe, gratitude, and devotion, which belong to the highest religious consciousness.

The Greek idea of God, starting from the same primitive superstitions as the Jewish, developed in a different direction. Here it was not the prophets—for the Greeks did not greatly reverence the prophet—but the philosophers, in whom the higher idea evolved. By a process, which has been admirably set forth by Dr Edward Caird, the more intellectual of the Greeks came in time

to a severe monotheism, the most inspired expression of which we find in Plato, and the fullest development of which is shown in the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus. The one was despotic master of the civilised world, the other a lame slave; yet their idea of God is almost identical, and much of it finally trickled through into Christianity. This Greek religion does remarkable justice to some of the sides of human experience of the divine, and preaches a very exalted morality; its weakness is on the side of the emotions, which ancient philosophy consistently despised.

The radical difference between the Jewish and the Greek conception of God lies in this, that the Jews regarded God as personal, the Greeks as impersonal. The contrast thus broadly stated is somewhat exaggerated. For in the highest expressions of Jewish religion, such as passages in the Psalms, in Isaiah, and in the book of Job, we find phrases which imply in God personality, but personality very far removed from that of man. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." "Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself." And the Greeks when they worked their way from a Zeus who was not only personal, but full of human frailties, to a divine Father of mankind, did retain in their higher conceptions something of personality. But

on the whole the contrast between the Greek and the Hebrew religious spirit in this matter is striking. And as early Christianity started rather from the Jewish than from the Greek idea of God, it is natural that this belief in divine personality should have dominated it.

In the Synoptic Gospels there is no speculation as to the nature of God. The point of view is strictly practical, we might say pragmatist. It is the relation of God to man, his working in the world of nature and in the hearts of men that is spoken of. The will of God is mentioned, but again in a purely practical way, as the law to which man is bound to conform. The love of God to man is constantly insisted on; but here again the word "love" only helps us by an analogy to understand the action of God in the human world. In the Fourth Gospel the phrase "God is Spirit" [1] takes us for a moment beyond the bounds of practical religion into the realm of thought; but the phrase is not expanded or explained. The view of St Paul is like that of the Old Testament, but that he adds that God is the Father of Christ, and revealed through Christ.

The task of Christianity was to develop what was best in the theology of Judæa and Greece, and to bring it on to a higher platform by help of the Spirit which worked in the Church, in a word to baptize it into Christ. It was by the

[1] Not *a* spirit. See R.V.

life of the historic Jesus and by the working of the spirit of Christ in the Church that the theism of the ancient world was transmuted into Christianity.

God's Power, Holiness, and Love

Presently I shall speak of the most specific part of the doctrine of Christianity, of the Founder of the Faith, and of the Holy Spirit, which is the continual inspiration of the Christian Church. But at present I wish to dwell in more detail on the revelation of God our Father in the New Testament and in the life of Christianity. I will speak successively of the power of God, of his holiness, and of his love. Of all three I will treat from the practical point of view, in the light of experience. There has been in philosophy a great deal of writing in regard to the Absolute. As to that I have nothing to say. That God is transcendent I earnestly believe; human thought cannot fathom the depths of divinity. We can bathe in the shallows of the sea and pick up on the shore the treasures which the waves throw up; but at the ocean which lies beyond we can but gaze and wonder. But an absolute Deity as a being to be talked about, admitted into our little schemes of thought, comprehended and fathomed, is beyond the reach of my intelligence. According to strict interpretation, absolute is the opposite of relative. An absolute deity, as

opposed to a relative deity, that is to a deity in constant relation to man and nature, is necessarily outside the range of thought and human intelligence. If it pleases some philosophers to talk about the Absolute, so be it; but ordinary men will insist on melting down what they say, inquiring what is the value of their assertions in regard to scientific truth and the conduct of life, and only accept what seems worth accepting. I shall speak of the great attributes of God, power, goodness, and love, only in their relation to human experience.

The power of God includes all power in the Universe, excepting only that which is shut off from the rest by what I have called the sluice-gates of will. The forces of nature, of gravitation, electricity, vitality, are of God, and form part of the great scheme of things which was made for man, and of which man is the crown and consummation. The energy stored in every atom of matter, which is available in coal, in mineral oil, in radium, the energy which streams from the sun, is an offer by God of unlimited sources of power, to be well or badly applied. But in no such rigid and fixed ways does the divine power work in human consciousness, but on the lines of freedom. I say in "human consciousness," though probably many thinkers would prefer to say "wherever there is conscious life," even among animals, which like man have

power to work either in accordance with, or in opposition to, the law of their being. But I prefer to speak of the consciousness of man, which we can study and comprehend, while that of animals is at present almost a sealed book to us. And what this human consciousness reveals to us is a vast ocean of spiritual power, on which we can draw, if not to an infinite extent, at any rate to an extent only limited and bounded by the conditions of our mortality.

In the Jewish scriptures, the prowess of Joshua, the strength of Samson, the wisdom of Solomon, are all spoken of as the direct results of divine aid and inspiration. Epictetus speaks in the same way of his powers of thought and of endurance. And I venture to say that it is the natural and spontaneous view of every one gifted with natural piety.

But when a man adds to natural piety reasoned religion, he begins to distinguish. He finds that the power of God, even if present in every outpouring of good energy, is yet infinitely more traceable in such thought, such feeling, and such action as are concerned with the ideal. The character of action is not indifferent to the divine energy, which sometimes approves and sometimes disapproves it. Righteousness and kindness in conduct, beauty in art, truth in matters of intellect, are in the line of divine approval.

The more freely the personality exposes itself to the influence of the world of spirit, the more fully conscious does it become of a higher will, dominant in that realm, and urging it to certain courses of action. Into that higher will it can never, according to the teaching of Christianity, in this life be wholly absorbed. That is the dream of the oriental ascetic, but not of the working Christian. At the highest point of his life, in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Founder of the faith does not show a will wholly absorbed in the divine, but prays, "Not my will, but thine, be done." Seekers after God, in the phrase of Longfellow, "touch God's right hand in the darkness, and are lifted up and strengthened." But God's right hand does not carry them away; it only enables them to walk upright.

To the phrase "the will of God," the objection is often made that it is anthropomorphic, representing God as a "magnificd and non-natural man," in the well-known phrase of Matthew Arnold. Such a meaning as that I disclaim. I use the phrase, in a purely practical way, to express the experience which is testified to in hundreds of biographies, of a power not oneself, over and above oneself, which urges in the direction of the good. Arnold's definition of God was as "the power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness." But we need a wider definition. In relation to the will the phrase may be satis-

factory. But the great spiritual power works not only in relation to the will, but also in the field of emotion and thought. Therefore it will be more satisfactory to speak of God as the power which impels in the direction of the ideal, or, in more Platonic phrase, as the "source of ideas." I have used these phrases in various writings, but their meaning is apt to be misunderstood, as we are apt, in ordinary conversation, to use the word "idea" in a very loose way.

Between God and man there arises a constant process of give and take, of veneration and conscious obedience, which grows and matures as the individual grows and matures. And from this intercommunion spring alike wisdom and emotion, a gradual expansion of the mind towards what is as yet unknown, and a gradual deepening of the feeling which is embodied in the eternal phrases of the Lord's Prayer. Of course, the phrase, "Our Father who art in heaven" may be used in many senses; and to no two persons will it have exactly the same meaning. To us in the twentieth century it is largely emptied of meaning, because our ideal of human fatherhood has degenerated. A father among us commonly seeks rather to be a friend and companion to his children than an object of profound respect. And children who think their father mistaken, have little scruple in disobeying him. But from the beginning it was not so. To the Jews of the

time of our Lord the paternal relation was a very severe one. At an earlier time the father had had power of life and death over his children, and he was still the venerated chief of a clan, the ultimate judge of all questions. It is thus that the phrase of Jesus would be understood by his contemporaries.

It is only a strong belief in the Fatherhood of God which can furnish an adequate basis for a belief in the brotherhood of men. People often talk of the love of man for man, of the people of one race and disposition for those of another race and disposition, as if it were a simple and obvious tendency. And great sentimentalists like Rousseau, at the time of the French Revolution, have placed this sentiment of humanity at the base of all virtue. They have thought that the diversion of thought and affection into the ways of religion was the great hindrance which stood in the way of universal love between man and man. The sentimental philanthropy of Rousseau paved the way for the anti-human destructiveness of the Napoleonic wars. We have only to look at the state of Europe to-day to see how small is the natural tendency of man to love mankind. We see nation bitterly hostile to nation, class to class, district to district. And a nation will justify its hatred on the ground of patriotism, somehow learning to think that it stands itself for all virtue, and its rivals for all vice and

cruelty. The extreme symptom is that every nation is talking about atrocities committed against its members by other peoples; tales of such atrocities, partly true and partly false, circulate everywhere, and they are believed, not so much on grounds of evidence, as because it is considered natural that rival nations should behave in such a way.

Mankind would never have advanced from a savage to a civilised condition but for the religious ties which united men into clans with common worships and nations with recognised deities. And the love for man as man, the "enthusiasm of humanity," will never get the better of the rivalries and hostilities between groups of men, classes in industrial countries, and nations of various blood and traditions, unless it is rooted in a sense of a common relation of all alike to the spiritual source of humanity. At present it is beyond doubt that there is more of the feeling of kinship between nations among Mohammedans than among Christians, and it is based on their religion. Until Christians return to the sense of humanity based upon religion felt in the early Church, it is hard to see how the excesses of national feeling can be checked.

From the lowering and misinterpretation of the idea of paternity the phrase "Our Father in heaven" has greatly suffered. And not only on the side of religious thought, but, what is much

more important, on the practical side. Men have come to think of God as a weak and indulgent parent, who will not be hard on them in any case, who will think more of their happiness than of their perfection, and give them the things which they want or think they want. This way of regarding God had spread widely ten years ago, and veneration was drowned in a flood of sickly talk about the divine love. It is little wonder that when the trying days of the war came, the bitter experiences of the campaign made many thousands of souls doubt of the existence of God, and say that if there were a God, he would not allow the war to go on. Their feeling had a ground of truth. There is not, in fact, any such God as they had heard of in church and chapel, a God of infinite mercy but no stern principle, who does not chastise, but only removes from men the punishments which they have justly deserved.

If God had arbitrarily intervened to stop the war, without removing the causes which brought it on, he would have acted like an unskilful physician who removes symptoms and leaves the disease which caused them unchecked. He would have done no real good, and yet he would have destroyed the moral order of the world. If God now intervened to stop in Russia the distress which has been caused by the wickedness of some and the weakness and stupidity of others (for the drought is not at the bottom of the famine), he

would intervene between moral cause and effect, and again destroy the ethical character of the world. Of course this is no reason why we men should not do all in our power to alleviate the terrible sufferings of the Russian people, so long as we do not promote the evil courses of which it is the result. Being men, we are bound to be humane, and follow humane impulses; but the humanity of God is of another and a deeper kind.

The ordinary Christian teaching about God needs infinite stiffening. Such stiffening comes mainly from two sources, the study of scientific law in the universe, and experience of the working of God in the human world. In the Bible the sterner side of God is quite as prominent, even in the New Testament, as the more humane side; it is only that preachers had fallen into the way of dwelling on the latter to the exclusion of the former, whence the sickly one-sidedness of our current religion. For it is quite certain that if God forgives he also punishes; if he comforts he also afflicts. It is certain that multitudes, and those of the best of our race, have found the approach to God not easy but hard, the way that leads to life narrow and stony. What our age greatly needs, as a supplement and corrective of the doctrine of the divine kindness and compassion, is a doctrine of the divine righteousness, emphasis laid on the working of God as one

who hates all sin, all falseness, all cowardice, and all stupidity, who punishes those who pursue unworthy purposes and lower the moral tone of those with whom they come in contact.

This is, as is clear enough, an aspect of the divine of which in our days men gladly lose sight. And yet, surely, never before in the history of the world were the workings of the divine righteousness more manifest. The spectacular collapse of German overweening ambition is a revelation of that side of God to which Greek tragedy bears special witness, his hatred of ambition which has no regard for the restraints of humanity, but sets the attainment of its own ends above any thought of goodness. And the great and persistent friction between classes is a nemesis of the immoral greed of capitalism during the last century. We have made haste to be rich, in defiance of all care for human life, and the well-being of our fellow-men. We have exploited the material world, not caring what became of the interests of other peoples. And the result is written large all about us. Our riches are corrupted and tainted with a curse. There has never been a time when there was so little enjoyment to be had from those material goods which were meant for our enjoyment. A feeling of insecurity and recklessness has taken possession of men of the well-to-do classes, so that many of them cease to have any regard for the future, and try

to extort from the present moment any poor satisfaction which it may seem to afford. And the proletariate in all Europe, and not least in England and America, are profoundly discontented, always striving for more, and many of them openly speaking of revolution, though they cannot point out any possible result of revolution which would in fact improve even their material prosperity.

The way of God in the punishment alike of German military ambition and capitalist greed is the same way which God has taken in such cases through the whole course of history. He has allowed the fault to work out its own evil consequences. The insane recklessness of Germany in war banded against her so many foes that even her superb courage and organisation broke down under the strain. It is over again the moral taught by the history of Sparta, when she became the oppressor of Greece, and of Spain when the conquest of America had roused in her a reckless ambition. And the reaction against capitalism has come from the spread of the materialism of the capitalists to the working classes, whom they have used as pawns for the attainment of their own ends. The grasping of the artisan must lead, as the greed of the capitalist has led already, to discontent, restlessness, and faction; and in the end, unless it is checked, to the destruction of civilisation, perhaps of the white

races. Sin arises and grows, and for a while men rejoice in it, and find its fruits sweet. But as it spreads and develops it shows that self-contradictory and anti-social character which is inherent in all sin, and poisons the blood of the countries or the classes whom it holds in its grip. In the long run the righteousness of God vindicates itself with terrific force, and men are swept away like birds in a hurricane.

The conception of God which dominates the great majority of people is still at the pre-scientific and arbitrary stage. They think that if there be a God he must needs interfere in the orderly course of affairs in the interests of morality, or what they choose to regard as morality. And when great calamities or catastrophes happen, and the heavens remain silent, they dethrone God in their hearts. They say, in the current phrase, that they have no use for such a Deity. A far more serious question is whether God has any use for them. Instead of trying to find out what the ways of God really are, they make up their minds what they ought to be, and when experience explodes their facile optimism they abandon religion altogether.

But the universe under the government of God is a moral whole, a realm of order and law. We see this easily in regard to the material world. If chance ruled there, or if the divine power were constantly intervening, there could be no material

progress, and no steady use of the resources which lie around us. If iron sometimes floated and sometimes sank, how could we make iron ships? If gold were sometimes heavier and sometimes lighter than silver, how could we have a trustworthy coinage? Unless we could exactly calculate the force to be got out of a ton of coal, engineering would be paralysed.

And in just the same way in the world of human action and morals, unless the results of action were fixed and definite, the sinews of conduct would be cut. If habitual self-indulgence did not weaken character, and systematic ill-doing deprave it, we should soon cease to strive after goodness. If deeds of mercy and kindness did not regularly bring happiness both to giver and receiver, there would be a flaw, a discontinuity in the moral universe.

The Jews, as was natural at the time, thought that the interventions of God took the form of suspensions or violations of law in the material world. They thought that God would smooth the waves for a ship which carried a great mission. They thought that if they repented at a time of famine God would at once send rain. And many people to this day remain in this pre-scientific frame of mind. But Christians ought to remember that it is expressly condemned by the Saviour. "God maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on

the just and on the unjust." We have here an express denial of the ordinary Jewish belief. God does not directly punish sin by withholding rain. And yet since moral law underlies mere physical law, it remains in a real sense true that "a fruitful land maketh he barren, for the iniquity of them that dwell therein."

God in History

Nevertheless it is not a wise, nor in the event a true view, which contents itself with prophecying evil, and which looks on the world in a merely pessimistic light. The history of England, beyond that of other countries, gives us many glances in which hope predominates. Over and over again, the mercy of God in dealing with our ancestors has tempered his justice. Many times we have seemed to be on the brink of ruin, and the hand of God has rescued us. Many times the land has been through the phases marked in the 107th Psalm. "Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses." We are now suffering, and we shall suffer more: but we have no right to despair of rescue. Only one thing is essential, and that is a right heart. But the mercy of God does not

over-ride the human will, it only aids and inspires it, raising up from time to time the men who save society.

Righteousness extends from God to man, and in a measure from man to fellow-man, but not from man to God. But the divine love, which is the complement of righteousness, flows in two streams, from God to man, and from man to God. The love of God to man is a great stream of cosmic influence, which began before the world came into being, and has flowed ever since, though far more strongly into some lives than others, for the notion that God loves all men equally is a mere metaphysical figment. God loves all; but the influx of divine love, or at all events the experience of divine love, is much more evident in some lives than in others. The Jewish race, no doubt, went too far when they imagined that they were a people chosen out of the world and regarded with exclusive love by God. "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." Yet can we doubt that there was a special love of God for the race which did far more than any other for the realisation in the world of the divine ideas? Can we put the Jewish people in antiquity on the same level of divine favour as Babylon and Tyre?

And the Greeks in the course of history have been quite as much a chosen race as the Jews. As it was the function of the Jews to emphasise the

divine element in conduct, so it was the function of the Greeks to emphasise the humane element in philosophy, in literature, and in art. Our daily life, the level of civilisation which we have reached, probably owes as much to the one race as the other. As Sir Henry Maine so lucidly showed, in the history of the nations, stagnation is the rule, and true progress the exception ; and but for the Greeks we might have rested in the contemplative incapacity of India, the savagery of the earlier Middle Ages in Europe, the fossilisation of China. Our ideals in poetry, in art, in society, are derived from Greece, and spring out of the divine revelation to Greece, and the love of God for the leaders and teachers of Greece.

It is the same in the case of individuals. The love of God shines into their lives with varied brightness, and in many forms, endowing one with unquenchable energy for good deeds, another with a passionate love of truth, an enthusiasm of veracity, another with an insatiable desire of what is beautiful. To more ordinary people these endowments come in a less copious stream, and with less clear indications of their source, so that a man will often ascribe to a parent, a teacher, an institution, what really came to him through such agency direct from above. As St Paul puts it, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase."

Another kind of experience through which we

realise the goodness of God is the forgiveness of sin. There are among us many, in these days, who speak with dislike, and even contempt, of the Christian doctrine of sin. They think that if they occasionally go wrong it is only natural, and God will not resent it. Kindly men among us, they think, are not quick at resenting injury : and a Deity whose nature is love will be still readier to forgive. But as a matter of fact, if we study the course of the world, what is most obvious is the extreme sternness of the divine justice. The smallest slip, even an almost unavoidable bit of ignorance, is remorselessly punished. A man goes on heedlessly, not thinking, and he is suddenly caught in the wheels of an inexorable necessity, and crushed or badly mutilated. Experience teaches nothing more thoroughly than the stern regularity with which the forces of nature and of the human world work, and the hopelessness of trying to escape them.

It is only religion which shows another side to the divine order. When that order is violated condign punishment follows. But if a man acknowledges his transgression, and comes to God for forgiveness, a strange thing happens. No miracle takes place, no sudden interposition between cause and effect, but nevertheless the whole aspect of things changes, as an iceberg may turn over, and show a new outline above the water. A man may even glory in his

tribulation, when it brings him a closer and more vivid view of the divine goodness. Such is the experience of the forgiveness of sin which has been felt by innumerable Christians in all ages. And if a man denies God, and expels religion from his life, the result will not be to free him from the painful consequences of a collision with law, but will be only to prevent him from enjoying the sense of forgiveness, of reconciliation, which would mitigate those consequences, or even drive them out of sight.

The Divine Personality

In the world of modern thought the naïve Jewish conception of the personality of God of course requires modification. Our knowledge of nature has been enormously developed, and our conception of the universe infinitely expanded. But our experience of God in relation to man is in essence not unlike that of the prophets and psalmists of Israel, only that in Christ that experience has been greatly raised and extended. God has been revealed in Christ in new and wonderful ways. And our belief in the personality of God, which rests on that experience, has been exalted and refined. But when we speak of the divine personality, what we really mean is that in Christian experience God shows some of the attributes of human personality, wisdom, goodness, and kindness. We must not limit the

conception of God to personality; but only say that as he is revealed to men he shows a side kindred to human personality. It is a practical view, justified by and necessary to the ethical life. It may be infinitely expanded by pious meditation, but can never be safely used as a foundation for speculative schemes of metaphysics. After gaining all the knowledge we can of God's ways of working in the world of humanity, and having glimpses of a sublimity which we cannot measure, we have to combine with the trust in the divine fatherhood as taught in the Lord's Prayer the phrase of Isaiah, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

In approaching the question of the divine personality from the practical point of view and by the method used in the present work, we must regard as, generally speaking, inconclusive any a priori arguments derived from our theories as to the nature of spirit or the constitution of the world. And we must reject as illusory the view of the man in the street that God is a monad, as ourselves are monads, so that we can speak of him as a magnified non-natural man. We must take our start from the facts of religious experience, and see what is really involved in them.

The belief in the divine personality is really based on the fact that when we approach God

in prayer and meditation we find resistances of a particular kind, which are parallel to the resistances which we meet in approaching our fellow-men. If God were, as some writers have maintained, merely evolved from our own consciousness, these resistances would not exist. We come to God with wishes and petitions arising out of our own feelings and hopes. If God were a subjective projection, these petitions would meet no response, but die away into the empty sky. And this no doubt is the experience of many, who in consequence cease to have any real belief in God. But in the case of those who cultivate the life of the spirit, it is otherwise. They feel themselves in a presence of overpowering force. Their wishes and hopes often cease or are transformed; they feel the poorness of such energies. Or again, these wishes are strengthened and purified, so that the petitioner feels that he has a right to them, and that they are in the line of the higher life.

There is in this a close and remarkable likeness to the approach to our fellow-men. I do not mean ordinary acquaintances, but the few for whom we have a very high regard; in whom, as we say, we believe. As we speak to them we find that in the intercourse of soul with soul our feelings change, our views are raised and refined. We feel the influence of the personality of our friend dominating our own, and giving us a new outlook

which is partly our own and partly his. Hence arises in us that intense belief in the reality and objectivity of our friend's being, our recognition of his excellent personality.

It seems very natural to feel in the same way as regards God. We recognise that his thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways, but immeasurably superior. And the conclusion comes on us at once, that as our friends are persons so is God a person. The parallel is so obvious, and the conclusion so simple, that everyone, I suppose, naturally is disposed to accept them. And there is surely no harm in doing so.

Direct and perfect communion with God is so rare and so difficult that hardly anyone can hope to attain to it; probably in the whole course of history it has been attained to but once. To feel the divine presence, and to gain thence moral energy and intellectual enlightenment, is possible for most; but fully to comprehend the nature of God, and to repair to him as an infallible guide, is quite another thing, a thing to which men may make infinite approach without ever reaching it.

A comparison may be useful. Wireless telegraphy enables anyone to be in communication with his friends. But he will only receive the message of those friends if his instrument is of a particular pitch; and other communications with which he has nothing to do may so crowd

upon him that the one desired message may not reach him. Similarly, in the stress of the world, and amid the discordant urgings of surrounding human beings, the voice of God may be inaudible. But even if a man have become spiritually deaf, the testimony of others and the reading of books of religion is quite enough to prove the objectivity of divine communications.

When, however, we reflect, we find that the parallel between communicating with God and communicating with our fellow-men is not so close as we might imagine. When we consider what beliefs as to God have been held even by civilised and intelligent people; when we observe that, even among Christians, it is quite usual to make an appeal to some delegate of God, some saint or angel, take the place of direct communication, we shall discern the intellectual dangers which beset any attempt to deduce from religious experience any reasoned or satisfying doctrine of God. The best formula which I can suggest is that we learn by experience that there is in the divine nature, in the ruler of the spiritual world, something akin to personality, something that may answer our appeals as a friend might answer them, yet that any personality which we can ascribe to God is so infinitely above and beyond any which we can comprehend, that we are utterly lost in the contemplation of it.

Later on I shall return to this subject of

mediators between God and man. Probably to many, or most people, it is easier and more helpful to think of divine aid as coming from some lesser source than God. Probably modesty would suggest to many that in the small affairs of daily life it is presumptuous to expect direct aid from the infinite source. Yet the experience of life shows that aid from above does come even in small and almost indifferent matters. The fact is that the distinction between small and great in practice is almost arbitrary; and we never know whether the thing we are doing is important or unimportant, whether it is negligible or whether it will have abiding consequences. Therefore if any man prefers to think that God appoints a subordinate power, some guardian angel, to watch over him, to avert evil and lead to the higher, it seems to be quite a legitimate view. It is, of course, thoroughly Biblical; "He shall give his angels charge over thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto those that shall inherit salvation." Like most views in religious matters, it is liable to abuse, and may easily drift into superstition. But the man who sincerely believes in divine aid, however he may account for it, is infinitely nearer to the truth of things than the man who disbelieves in it.

There is another aspect of things which must not be overlooked. In the Gospels the great enemy of God, Satan, is spoken of as personal, and his action in the world is spoken of as similar to, but ever opposed to, the action of God. Modern sentimental Christianity, while pouring out oceans of vague religiosity in regard to God, does not speak of Satan or regard him seriously. Yet those who have been most advanced in the spiritual life have intensely believed in his existence, and attributed to him a personality corresponding to the divine personality, with the substitution, at every point, of evil for good. And belief in the diabolic personality rests on the same general ground of experience as belief in the divine personality. But since the latter belief is comforting and the former belief disturbing, people overlook the parallelism.

There are many modern substitutes for the old Christian doctrine of the personality of the Power of evil. Some, especially among men of science, regard evil in the human world as mere survival, as the working in and below consciousness of atavistic tendencies in man, of "the ape and tiger," of the fierce passions of the savage, and the callous selfishness of the barbarian. Some regard evil as imperfect and inchoate good; some consider wickedness as a sort of aberration or disease.

Evil and wickedness exist; but to try to

account for them is to enter into endless speculative difficulties. All that I am bound to maintain is, that in fact man is inwardly tempted to evil, and outwardly is always falling into evil. Forces and tendencies in the world of spirit are not all good, but sometimes very evil. Our spirits live in a world of mixed good and evil, and the course of our lives may bend in the direction of good or in the direction of evil. It is our one great business to admit through the gate of the will impulses tending to good, and to shut out impulses tending to evil. And this we certainly cannot do by any inherent power of our own. It is only the spirit of good which can quench the spirit of evil, just as in our arteries the phagocytes can destroy the germs of disease. But it is for us as moral beings to help the power that makes for good.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ETERNAL CHRIST

The Person of Christ in the Gospels

The most fundamental problems which lie before Christian thought are the nature of Christ and the generic consciousness which unites Christians into a Church. These questions may not be of supreme importance to the unreflective. The great majority of Christians accept from authority the views on the subject which satisfied a past generation. But they are of the utmost importance to those who think, and wish to think consistently. And in an age like ours, when everything is brought into question, and when self-satisfied youth is ready to throw away every belief of which it does not see an obvious justification, it becomes of very great moment that all who are attached to Christianity should be able to give a reason for the faith which they cherish, should not be at the mercy of the sceptic.

In more than one of my published papers I have examined the root and the validity of the current doctrine of Christ. I have set side by side the historic picture of a human Jesus and

the mystic vision of the exalted Christ,[1] and I have maintained that the spirit of the Christian passes by faith from one to the other, and unites them by an effort of will and personality. But hitherto I have not tried to set forth in the light of reason a justification for that synthesis ; I have contented myself with hinting that the justifications attempted in previous ages are no longer quite valid. I have stopped short, in great part, from a feeling which the Greeks called *aidos*, an inevitable diffidence.

But to anyone conversant with the literature of the day, such scruples may well seem out of place.

Until recent years it has been the custom of theologians to cite in regard to the doctrine of Christ passages taken almost at random from the Bible, which was regarded as inspired or infallible. If some of these passages were inconsistent with others, an art, the art of the reconciler or expositor, was brought in to produce harmony out of an apparent discord. Not only were all the four Gospels used as first-hand authorities as to the sayings and doings of Jesus, but passages from St Paul's Epistles, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and other documents of the New Testament, were freely quoted as authorities for the Christian teaching in regard to the

[1] *Modernity and the Churches*, p. 230 ; " Jesus or Christ " (*Hibbert Journal*, Supplement, 1909), p. 45.

Founder, without regard to the context or the circumstances of writing. Even passages from the books of the Old Testament were used to fill any apparent gap in the record, not, of course, in a quite literal, but in a transfigured, sense. Most of the writers of the Roman and the Anglican Churches, whatever may be their claim to method, still usually follow this course. And it is the course adopted in the great majority of the pulpits of the land. Nor is any other course desired by the mass of the Christian laity.

But such procedure has become impossible to all who have been affected by the tide of humanist criticism, which, starting with a more careful investigation of the literature of Greece and Rome, has gone on to apply the canons thence derived to the books comprised in the Bible. Naturally it has raised strong opposition. It has been set down to the malignity of German specialism. In many quarters any protest, however ignorant, against what is called "the higher criticism," meets with applause. All this is absurd. It is quite true that specialism in theology, as in many other things, has been carried to excess in Germany. But the main principles of historic and literary criticism, as applied to the Bible and the early history of Christianity, are not at all peculiar to Germany. They are accepted wherever education is on a reasonable basis. Florence and Paris, Basel and

Brussels, the English and the American Cambridge, are in this matter at one. The very phrase "higher criticism," which is supposed to embody a claim to superiority, really only means, in all well-informed schools of theology, criticism which passes beyond mere verbal and textual research to the *matter* and origin of the documents of the Old and New Testaments.

The first and the most fundamental problem set before New Testament criticism is to distinguish between the teaching of Jesus and the teaching in regard to Christ in the writings of the earliest disciples. The line of division is comparatively simple. The three Synoptic Gospels, though in places they are coloured by the medium through which the biography they embody passed before it was written down in the present form, yet certainly do contain a good, and on the whole trustworthy, account of the teaching of Jesus. The views of the early disciples in regard to the Founder also come to us from three sources, which are, ranged in order of date, the Epistles of St Paul, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Fourth Gospel. This Gospel is no doubt the crux of the situation, the storm-centre of theological controversy. It is impossible here to discuss the various views which may be taken of it; I can only briefly state that on which, as I am convinced, criticism is steadily settling. There are in this Gospel reminiscences of

actual events in the life of the Saviour, reminiscences which may go back to some actual companion, and not impossibly to John the son of Zebedee, whom tradition takes to Ephesus. In the narrative of the last days there may be a good deal of actual history. But the historic element in the Gospel is completely overlaid with elements which are not historic. The personality whom it brings before us, however grand and remarkable, is not one who could ever have actually walked the earth. In the main the book is a series of parables, sometimes with and sometimes without a historic nucleus, tending to exalt the eternal Son of God, the spiritual life of the Church. We have a series of phrases, sublime indeed, but not in the manner of the Jesus of the Synoptists, such as "I am the bread of life," "I am the light of the world," "I am the resurrection and the life." And around these phrases is built a structure of narrative, of exposition and of exhortation. It is not possible to take either the sayings or the commentaries as coming from the historic Jesus, though we may well regard them as given to the Church by the Spirit of Christ which dwelt in it.

When, then, we inquire what was the teaching of Jesus in regard to his own person, we find that it is of the simplest description, and in the fullest sense practical, having to do, not with thought, but with conduct. Doing the will of

God is set forth by Jesus as the ultimate good, as the end after which all men should strive, and the end towards which his own life was utterly devoted. The three theses on which he dwells with constant iteration are the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the duty of bringing in on earth the divine kingdom, in which the will of God shall be fully done. But at present only one point in the teaching concerns us; what did Jesus teach as to his own nature, and his relation to God? There is only one passage in the Synoptists where he makes a claim such as those of which the Fourth Gospel is full, what one may call a theological claim. "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him."[1] This passage stands by itself, and biblical commentators have observed that it is in close accord with the teaching of the Fourth Evangelist. It seems quite clear that it belongs to the period after the crucifixion, and represents not the teaching of Jesus, but the teaching of the disciples about Jesus. The last verse of Matthew, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," can be clearly shown to be an anachronism, because we have in *Acts* many records of baptisms, and in none

[1] Matt. xi. 27.

of them is the formula which Matthew represents as dictated by their risen Lord to the Apostles ever used. We may, therefore, fairly say that we have no knowledge of any metaphysical teaching of Jesus himself as to his relation to God and the world of spirit.

After the numerous writings on the Eschatology of the Gospels which have appeared since the beginning of this century, it seems to me difficult to doubt that Jesus expected an immediate coming of the kingdom of heaven.[1] Strange events, he thought, were about to take place in the world, and the divine kingdom to come in by a sudden revelation of God from heaven. It seems probable, though this is less clear, that he thought of himself as chief actor in this revelation, as coming with an angelic army to set up the kingdom on earth. From the point of view of this book, such an illusion (for that it was an illusion cannot be denied) does not seriously diminish our veneration for the Saviour. In a high and spiritual sense it was true that there was approaching a great change and a new revelation of God to man, and it was true that it was to arise out of his own life and death. Only the clouds of the Jewish atmosphere did

[1] See especially Mark xiv. 25, 62. I think that the greater part of the discourse in Mark is not authentic. It is harder to dispute the authenticity of phrases which occur in a dispersed way in the narrative.

in a measure cause him to misinterpret the inner revelation, largely in consequence of the value which all pious Jews at the time attributed to the eschatological writings which were circulating among them.

In any case it seems to me beyond question that Schweitzer and his adherents have gone much too far, in regarding eschatology as the basis of the teaching of Jesus. There are in the Synoptics remarkable passages which seem to set forth another view. "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for lo the kingdom of God is within (or in the midst of) you." And many parables, such as that of the leaven and that of the mustard seed, seem to imply not a sudden interruption of history, but a historic process gradually working. Whether the two views were accepted by the Saviour, one in one part of his life, the other in another part, or whether they lay side by side in the human consciousness of the Saviour, is a question of the greatest difficulty, probably a question which is insoluble. But what is clear, is that the belief in a cataclysm is not primary, does not completely condition the whole teaching of Jesus, but is a separate or extraneous element, which is not dominant. What is dominant is the practical working sense of the all-importance of the spiritual substratum of life, the sense of religious

values. The roots of his teaching were far deeper, going into the whole spiritual ground of life and the profound relations between God and man. When by the end of the first century of our era the hope of a sudden catastrophe, and of a reign of the saints on earth began to decay, it left the sublime teaching of the Saviour in the main uninjured. It only needed re-setting : and this it has needed from time to time through the ages. The setting has to be renewed, but the jewels retain their form and their lustre. In fact, the doctrine of the Kingdom and the teaching as to conduct were two sides of one overwhelming conviction of the spiritual basis of life, and of the transitoriness of what is visible. It is this conviction in the mind of the Saviour, and its embodiment in his life, which are the source of the Christian inspiration. The end of the world did not come ; and the explicit maxims of conduct which Jesus expressed have to be modified and interpreted before they can be acted on in any settled and continuous civic life. They are taken literally only by a few, whom we may call, as we please, saints or fanatics. But from the divine source whence came these maxims of conduct, there have flowed into the Church continually fresh revelations dominated and inspired by the Spirit of the Founder.

In the Gospels the life of Jesus is broidered with a tissue of miracle. In our days almost all

theologians allow that miracles need not be accepted as literal history, but must be divided into classes. That Jesus exercised remarkable powers of healing is allowed by all. And the modern development, especially furthered by experiences of the war, of faith-healing and psychiatry, has furnished such near parallels [1] to the cures recorded by the Synoptists that complete scepticism in regard to the latter is hardly justified. The few miracles of another class in our records are no doubt based on tradition mingled with misunderstanding. Their value as evidence for the supernatural nature of the Founder of Christianity would be dwelt on by few authorities.

Such a view of the human life of the Saviour as is here implied is very usual among Christians at present. It was greatly furthered by the appearance in the last generation of *Ecce Homo!* a work of undoubted genius, which on its first appearance was regarded by extreme Evangelicals as "vomited out of the mouth of Hell," but is now cited with appreciation in many pulpits. Recently we have had a work of similar character, Dr Glover's *Jesus of History*, which has not only been accepted as a text-book by the Christian Student Movement, but has been commended to the Church in a Preface by the Archbishop of Canterbury. What further need have we of witnesses?

[1] See especially an excellent little work, *Miracles and the New Psychology*, by E. R. Micklem.

Shortly before the great war Dr Sanday caused considerable disturbance in the theological world by advocating a new and remarkable view as to the divine nature of Christ.[1] He sums up his doctrine thus: "The proper seat or locus of all divine indwelling, or divine action upon the human soul, is the subliminal consciousness." "The same or the corresponding subliminal consciousness is the proper seat or locus of the Deity of the incarnate Christ." That there is truth in this view is scarcely to be denied. As we have seen in the chapter on Inspiration, this is closely connected with the unconscious: but I have maintained that we should call the source of the revelation which thus comes rather superliminal than subliminal. And it must be added that the view of Dr Sanday, though true, is not the whole truth, since there is an inspiration of the character, of the whole being of man, as well as of his more impersonal side. Inspiration may come to a man so impersonally as to have little to do with the human medium; it may find an utterance through him when he is in an unconscious state of ecstasy or in a half-conscious state of dreaming. But when it is intertwined with action and produces results in the character the case is different. And man does not in fact consist of independent parts; but is a whole. In Jesus, teaching, action, and character are so

[1] *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, 1910.

intertwined that they cannot be separated even in thought. In him the conscious and the unconscious were not two, but one Christ.

The Person of Christ among the Early Disciples

Jesus had no sooner passed away from the sight of the Apostles than they were filled with an overwhelming conviction that their Master, though not visible, was present with them in spirit, giving them constant help, and a power which neither devil nor man could resist, a wisdom which confounded all opponents, and a peace and joy which raised them to another level of being. At first they were content merely to recognise the fact, and to say that the Jesus who had been crucified had been raised by God and exalted to be a Saviour for all mankind, so that in faithful reliance upon Him all men could be saved from sin and made partakers of a life which was eternal. This is the gist of the speech attributed to St Peter in *Acts*, on the day of Pentecost. And to simple and unlearned men such as were the Apostles, it was the most natural view to take. It simply put together the obvious facts of everyday experience, without any attempt to explain them or to form a rational creed.

But it is clear that such a state of mind could not continue. All men must reflect on experience, and make some effort to understand it; and as

men of greater intellect and better acquaintance with Greek philosophy joined the society, the ball of speculative metaphysics was set rolling, and has rolled on even to our day, every generation of Christians, if they did not accept the authorised dicta of authority, trying to think out the root-problems of Christianity; or even if they did accept the received formulæ, trying to attach to them a fresh meaning, taken from the current philosophy of the time.

It is clear that Matthew and Luke held what must be called a monadic view of their Master's person. They thought that the Jesus who still dwelt in the memory of some of those for whom they wrote came into being at a definite time, in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, taught and wrought for a few months in Galilee and Judea, was put to death, and after death was raised up by the power of God, and was soon to return, as the same person whom they had seen or heard of in the flesh, to establish upon earth the reign of the saints. Of any previous existence of their Master they say nothing. Thus the personality of their Lord, however exalted and inspired by a close communion with God, was of the same kind as the personalities of ordinary men, until he was exalted after death to be a prince and a saviour. But as the society grew, this view was found to be inadequate.

St Paul's explanation is that Jesus was a

great spiritual power, a sort of subordinate deity, who for the sake of man abandoned his heavenly state and came down to live the life of a peasant, and to die the death of a felon on earth, in order that by such sufferings he might redeem mankind and do away with the disastrous consequences of the sin of Adam. After the crucifixion Christ resumed his place at the right hand of God, whence he could sympathise with and succour all who called on his name with faith, giving them a share in his own supernatural power and life.

The view of the Fourth Evangelist, an Ephesian disciple of St Paul, though it has a superficial likeness to St Paul's, is really in many ways very different. It is far less genuinely Jewish, and far more transfused with that Greek or, rather, Hellenistic culture of which Ephesus was one of the chief seats. The writer was the first and the greatest of Christian Mystics, and his view, or some imitation or translation of it, has been throughout the history of Christianity the belief of the noblest and most exalted souls. No document ever written by man has been more misunderstood and traduced than the Fourth Gospel. The hero of the Gospel is not the historic Jesus, save to some degree in the narrative of the Passion, but the Christ of the experience of the Church after the Apostolic age. The dialectic method of the writer is to show how the utterances

of the ideal Christ, or the inspirations of the eternal Christ were, and are, misunderstood and perverted by the blindness and materialism of the Jewish hearers, who again are not the Jews of Jerusalem, but all those who were by nature incapable of grasping the truth. This polemic has been commonly misunderstood, and in all ages of the Church the same blindness and materialism has in many quarters persisted, so as to misinterpret the writer, to turn his symbols into facts, his poetry into prose, his lofty and spiritualist idealism into hard creeds and materialist conceptions.

Most people know how, in the Johannine dialogues, the lofty sentences put in the mouth of Christ are misinterpreted by the hearers. They know that, when he speaks of the water of life, the Samaritan woman thinks that he means drinking-water, and when he speaks of being born again, Nicodemus asks how a man when he is old can be born of his mother a second time. But most people fail to see how this method of dialectic prevails in other parts of the teaching. When the Saviour says, "I am the bread of life," the literalists think, like the Samaritan woman, of bread to eat, disregarding the explanatory verses, "He that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall not thirst." "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." They carry on the line of the supposed Jews,

misunderstanding spiritual truth as the assertion of physical fact, degrading and materialising not less than the Samaritan woman herself.

It seems to me quite impossible that if the Evangelist had taken literally the phrase, "This is my body," he should have in his account of the Last Supper said not a word as to the partaking of bread and wine as a sacrificial meal, but should instead dwell on the washing of the Apostles' feet.

In one of the sublimest passages of the Fourth Gospel the writer transposes, so to speak, from the literal and historic into the mystic tense, the expectation then prevalent among the disciples of a speedy second coming of their Lord.

When Jesus journeys to Bethany, on hearing of the death of Lazarus, Martha, who represents the unspiritual and commonplace type of mind, says to him, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus replies to her, "Thy brother shall rise again," and she, taking the phrase in the manner of the woman of Samaria, literally and without insight, says, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." And Jesus, as in other passages in the Gospel, at once turns her thought from the literal to the spiritual sense, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." The

mere death of the body, he implies, must happen to all: but to those who have laid hold on eternal life, death is a merely unimportant incident, which can have no hold on the life of the spirit. The phrase of Jesus is familiar to us all from its constant use in the burial service; but how small a proportion of those who listen to the utterance in the most trying of all crises, when our beloved are taken from us, takes it in the higher sense.

The Johannine Jesus calls himself the "Son of God." In the Synoptic tradition this does not occur, save in the context already cited. But in the time after the crucifixion the phrase was at once taken by a party in the Church in a literal and materialist sense, whence arose the tale of the Virgin Birth at Bethlehem. But the Fourth Evangelist, to whom such materialism was abhorrent, could not accept that interpretation, but gives one of his own. Jesus, he says,[1] is the Son of God, because God consecrated him and sent him into the world: it was this divine consecration that constituted sonship. In other passages the writer goes somewhat further. In his proem he identifies Jesus with the Word or Reason in accordance with which God created the world. Obviously, I cannot here discuss the full meaning of this view, which was based on a Jewish modification of the Platonic philosophy,

[1] John x. 36.

and has a near parallel in the writings of Philo, who, however, had probably never heard of Jesus. In after days it was expanded and modified by Christian philosophers, such as Justin, who maintained that all the great men of past history who had lived in accordance with reason or the logos were followers of Christ, even though they had never heard of Jesus.

In the wonderful last chapters of the Gospel, Jesus is spoken of as telling his followers that he had been with the Father before the world came into being, that his life had been one of constant communion with God, that he was about to return to God, but that he would come again to the disciples in spiritual presence to dwell in them, as they should dwell in him, and bring the immanent deity to dwell in them. Closely mingled with this line of teaching there is another, which on the surface is scarcely to be reconciled with it, that Jesus would go to prepare a place in which to receive his followers; and that his place on earth should be taken by the Divine Spirit, the Paraclete. The fact is that, in attempting to translate into articulate thought the Christian experience, the Evangelist has embodied it in two ways, and has not thought it necessary to reconcile those ways one to another. In the same way St Paul speaks of God and the Spirit of God, Christ and the Spirit of Christ, in a way quite baffling to the theologians who

want to form a consistent metaphysical form of creed. Into all these intricate byways of thought I need not enter.[1] I have only to consider the general orientation of St Paul and the Fourth Evangelist in regard to the exalted Christ. St Paul does not address prayer to Christ, but to the God and Father whom Christ revealed. He regards it as clear that in consequence of the life and death of Christ the way of prayer to God is made smooth, and the appeal to the power of God made efficacious. He assumes that a change of orientation in the world of spirit had really taken place, and that God had been really and objectively brought near to man.

When the writers of whom I speak try to express this fact in doctrine, the doctrine takes one of two courses. Sometimes they speak of Christ as a great High Priest and Mediator, who presents the prayers of Christians at the throne of the Father, which is the line specially taken by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Sometimes—though this is a later development—they speak of Christ as partaker of the nature of the Godhead. From this beginning the elaborate metaphysical doctrine of the Trinity takes its rise. The formulators of that doctrine no doubt

[1] I have dealt more fully with the matter in two little works, *The Religious Experience of St Paul* and *The Ephesian Gospel.*

regarded it as an expression in words of high and objective truth. But the modern mind can regard it only as an expression of relative truth, an attempt to enclose in human formulæ the results of the spiritual life and the actual experience of the Church.

The experience which St Paul tried to express in doctrine, and the Fourth Evangelist threw into the form of a biography, was the continuous divine inspiration of the Christian Church. This inspiration abode in those at Jerusalem, and went with them in their missionary journeys, working within in peace and redemption, in freedom from sin and a glorious joy and peace which were not like those of the world around; and working without in strange signs and wonders, in the confounding and silencing of all who opposed, and the conversion of multitudes to the faith. Both St Paul and the Evangelist were quite convinced that the inspiration of the society was something quite new in the history of the world, and quite different from anything to be found outside the Church. But the view of St Paul, who had been brought up by Rabbis in pre-Christian days, and was only converted in middle life, was largely different from that of the Evangelist who wrote in a great Hellenistic city for the second generation of Christians. To St Paul the faith of Christ was the religion of Israel, exalted and spiritualised, free from its

outward and legal wrappings, transmuted by a new divine influence. And the view of the writer of *Hebrews* was not dissimilar. All his heroes are heroes of the Old Testament, and he draws abundant parallels, alike in history and rites, between the faith of Israel and Christianity. The Fourth Evangelist moves in a different atmosphere. To him the Jews are the stupid and bitter opponents of the Faith. And the Faith is such as will commend itself to every one who is a son of light and a lover of spiritual truth. "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," says his Jesus. Christ, he writes, "is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." He does not put Socrates and Plato with Moses and the prophets among the precursors of Christianity; such cosmopolitanism as that implies had to wait for Justin and Clement; but he himself owes almost as much to the Greeks as to the Jews, though his Hellenism has passed through the medium of the Jews of the Dispersion.

Christ in History and Experience

Certainly the transition is abrupt, if we pass directly from the New Testament to the twentieth century. But clearly I cannot attempt to trace even the outline of the continuous thought of the Church in regard to her Founder. We must at once come to the question how the continued

life of the Church, the union of Christians with their unseen Head, can be justified in the light of a spiritual interpretation of the Universe. Have such sayings as that Christ is the Head and the Church the body united to him, that Christ lives, and the believer lives in him, a real and intelligible meaning? As I have elsewhere observed, the Christian Church is built upon Jesus Christ, upon the hyphen which connects Jesus with Christ, the human and historic Jesus with the exalted and mystic Christ. That hyphen stands for a gap which has been in all ages overleaped by the faith and the practical necessities of the Church. But is it possible to construct across the gap a bridge of reason to satisfy those who dare not make a leap? or at all events to prove to those who are ready to make the leap that the gap is not an impassable abyss? In our days the justification of the hyphen cannot come from any a priori or metaphysical reasoning: the day of the validity of such reasoning passed away with the rise of the Kantian philosophy. Since the days of Kant, those who have not read his works, or perhaps who even have not heard of them, proceed on different paths of thought from those in vogue before he wrote. The mental atmosphere has been changed. Of course, I do not mean that the whole change is due to a single thinker. It is a great world process, which only culminated and became articulate in Hume and

Kant; and the roots of which lie in the attitude of the modern world in regard to thought.

Our proofs must be derived from two classes of facts; not, of course, from the facts of physical science, which help only in method and mental tone, but from the facts of history on the one side and psychology on the other.

The relevant fact of history is that from the time of the teaching of Jesus, and more especially from the time of his death on the cross, a new spirit and tendency came into the world. It was not the spirit of the Jewish prophets. Lofty and noble as was their religion, it belonged only to the Jewish race, and the body in whom it was most fully incorporated, the Pharisees, were the most bitter opponents of Jesus, and the sternest persecutors of his followers. But between the death of the Founder and the preaching of his immediate followers, we find a complete change of conditions which history must try to account for. We have no satisfactory consecutive account of the events of those years, for the early chapters of *Acts* are, from the point of view of scientific history, extremely defective. But we can trace dimly a course of events without equal in the history of the world. We find the disciples, who at the time of their Master's death were panic-stricken and given over to despair, suddenly with a high courage proclaiming that he was not dead, but with and among them, that God had highly

exalted him, and that they derived from him a power which was irresistible over the souls and even the bodies of men; and further, that by faith in him all men could shake off the trammels of an evil condition and become partakers of eternal life.

Not long after this, the Epistles of St Paul, some of the most trustworthy and authentic of the documents of the ancient world, mirror to us the character and spirit of the writer, and show us how in his life there came a crisis parallel to that which had recently taken place in the Jewish world. A crucial moment in the rise of Christianity occurred when in the consciousness of Paul, or perhaps rather in the unconscious levels of his spirit, there took place a marvellous change, and he passed from the religion of Israel to the religion of Christ. A flood of spiritual influence had been rising and rising at the door of his heart, but he kept the door rigidly closed: then suddenly the door gave way; and his whole being was flooded with a sudden inspiration, which never thereafter failed him, but led him onward through a life of complete self-devotion and a career of missionary enterprise to martyrdom at Rome, and an immortal position among the saints and founders of the Church.

I do not see any reasonable way of accounting for these startling phenomena save by the recognition of a great and sudden change in the

conditions of the spiritual ground of being. The nature of inspiration was modified; and a fresh series of divine ideas was in process of taking form in the world, taking form, no doubt, through the human agency of preaching and psychical dominance, but arising out of the ocean depths of spiritual being. For it is to be observed that the religion preached by the first Apostles and St Paul was the religion of their Master, only in some degree modified by the changed conditions. If we take the theology and ethics of Paul, item by item, we shall find that it is in its most important features a working out of the Gospel of the Synoptists.[1] Only in one respect does it completely differ from the earlier doctrine in that it centres not in the fatherhood of God and the righteousness of the divine will, but in the revelation of God in Christ, to whom every believer was united in a spiritual relationship, and who had by his death and resurrection redeemed him from the powers of evil.

In the course of human events, as in the course of nature, no event can take place without a cause; and I know not how the phenomena of early Christianity can be accounted for, except on the hypothesis of a fresh turn, a new orientation of the spiritual power which is at the heart of the world of life and humanity.

[1] For an expansion of these sentences, I may be allowed to refer to my *Religious Experience of St Paul.*

And whereas Christianity has, in the succeeding ages, suffered from every kind of corruption, of materialism and degradation, yet it has always from time to time shown a marvellous power of renewing its youth, of freshly embodying one side or another of the early teaching, of attacking and overthrowing some hindrance which stood in its way. Like the phœnix, it is ever turning back from fossilisation or decay, and it draws from an unseen source the power to dominate the world, or at least that part of the world which consists of the children of light.

The kingdom of God becomes the Church of Christ. Its advent is in a sense cataclysmic : but the cataclysm does not, as the whole Jewish nation had expected, come visibly and materially, but works from the consciousness of the human race outward.

In such a view as this there is nothing inconsistent with historic method and principle. For history shows that the revelation of the divine ideas has not been an uniform and regular process, but one which has had crises, times of higher inspiration which have cut into the more ordinary process of enlightenment. Into the general soul, as often into the souls of individuals, there has come a sudden flooding by spiritual power. In the case of individuals we call it conversion ; in the case of nations or of great societies we hardly know what to call it, but

we recognise its existence, and we see its permanent effects in the world. Such a change came notably in the sixth century B.C., when in Greece poetry and art came into being, and the world of culture set out on its great career. Such a change came over Israel when in the time of Cyrus the Persian the people returned to rebuild Jerusalem, and became far more than before a people of unique consciousness of God. Such a time was the sixteenth century of our era, when all the forces which were to mould and control the development of modern society came into being, or started on a new career, the era of the Reformation, of the purification of the Roman Church, of the revival of Greek letters and art. The era of the rise of Christianity was the greatest of all human crises, as we recognise every time we date a letter from the Christian era. But it has not in history stood quite alone. Its summit overtops that of other heights of the same range; but they are of similar formation.

Such periods were not really so isolated as they may seem to a student of history. They were led up to by a series of efforts, and a combination of conditions. On the preparation of the world for Christianity great books have been written, and still greater might well be written. It is sufficient here to say that at no period and in no place could the rising faith have found circumstances so favourable for its spread and growth. And

those who believe in the spiritual basis of history will recognise that the outward preparation and the inward inspiration belong together in what we may venture to call the divine purpose.

And when the stage was thus prepared, there came on it the great and unique Protagonist. It is through exalted personalities that the divine ideas become concentrated and reflected on mankind. The divine logos or word is revealed by prophet and by saint; and Jesus Christ so far excelled all the prophets that the Fourth Evangelist was justified in regarding him as in a new sense the Son of God, as the logos incarnate. A new way was opened between the Spirit and man; and by that way a new inspiration poured into the human world. The great Incarnation took place, and in its wake followed the Incarnation in the Apostles and saints who continued on earth the life of the Founder.

In the explanation of the Incarnation, Greek philosophy found a great field for centuries. None of the explanations which were reached by the thinkers of the Church is final or objectively perfect. And we, too, may well spend our best powers in the search for an explanation which will suit the conditions of modern thought. But whatever we may think of the explanations, the facts to be explained remain.

It is clear that the appeal to history will not convert a doubter to faith in Christ. If a man

have that faith, he will defend it on grounds of history; if he be of an intellectual temper he will find the need of historic justification pressing. But the appeal which will rouse the emotions and stir the will must derive from another source than history. That source is obviously experience, spiritual experience of aid given in the inner life, of sin resisted and peace attained. All through the history of Christianity faith has been based on such experience, "They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." The reality of spiritual aid amid the trials and difficulties of life is the solid basis of religion; and unless it were a solid basis religion would vanish from the earth. The Christian experience is the root alike of the Christian religion and the Christian Church.

And the Christian is often indisposed to discuss the roots of his faith in experience. He is content to say, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." His life had been poor and shrivelled; by faith in Christ it has become rich and free. He has found a Saviour and has been saved from sin, from the assaults of evil powers, from his own baser nature.

But from our present point of view this is not enough. We are considering whether Christian faith has a logical justification; and it is no reply to intellectual difficulties to say that the thing *works*.

It seems to me that St Paul, in a memorable phrase, has pointed out the true justification of the Christ-worship which in his day was coming into the Church. "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him so no more." [1] The eternal Christ is the immortal reality, of which the human Jesus was the reflection in the visible world. It was the eternal Christ who was the inspiration of the Church. It was the eternal Christ who appeared to Paul on the way, and sent him with changed heart on his great mission. It is the eternal Christ who is the life of the Church and its perpetual head.

There has been in the Church, and especially in the modern Protestant branches of the Church, a great deal of that Jesus worship which has tended to place Christ after the flesh in the seat of the Eternal. It has resulted in strange aberrations, such as the notion that Jesus in the cradle was at the same time on the throne of the Universe, that God died on the cross, that all through his mortal life Jesus was conscious of superhuman powers. It is embodied in many of our hymns, and inspires some of our litanies. But it is a view which becomes utterly impossible to anyone with a historic sense, even if he has not been educated in historic method. For no one can read the Synoptic Gospels with even moderate

[1] 2 Cor. v. 16.

attention and intelligence, without seeing that they portray a marvellous being indeed, but one who lived as a man among men, whose knowledge was limited, who felt the human feelings of indignation, depression to the verge of despair, exultation, love, and hostility. Jesus was tempted on all points as we are, though without yielding. He spent nights in prayer to God: he felt that his own will had to be suppressed, in order to be in harmony with the divine will.

At the same time, the historic Jesus appears to have been in a clear sense unique. His teaching was loftier and more spiritual than was ever uttered by man. Elsewhere I have spoken of it as pure spiritual oxygen, with no admixture of the nitrogen which abounds in the teaching of Plato, of Epictetus, of the greatest of non-Christian writers. His will was always on the side of God, even when he said, "Not my will, but thine, be done." The greater the saintliness of any among his followers the more he has realised the unapproachable superiority of the Master. So in the case of ordinary uncritical believers there is little fear of too absolute a devotion or too exalted a worship of the Saviour even in his historic revelation. Yet the higher Christian view is always that of St Paul. Now henceforth we must know Christ not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

What became of the body of Jesus we do not

know, and never can know : nor need we curiously inquire. His personality made on his disciples an impression which raised them to a new level of being, and through them the reverberations of it have echoed from man to man throughout history. And the impression has been fixed and preserved through the ages by the biographies which some of those nearest to him were inspired to commit first to the disciples and then to writing. It is for the succeeding ages a great gain that there is not one biography only, which might have become, like the Koran, a guide regarded as infallible, to limit the thought of the Church, and to restrain it within rigid boundaries. In the three Synoptic Gospels the human element is obvious to every serious student; we see the great original variously reflected in different minds, so that we now cannot be certain of the objective truth of the records, but recover a liberty to go behind them by pious imagination. We are obliged, by the nature of our evidence, to form beyond and behind the records the ideal humanity of the Saviour. And we gain also glimpses of the divine spirit which was behind the humanity; and which, after the death on the cross, was revealed more and more to the inspired consciousness of the society. The Fourth Evangelist had a clearer view of this indwelling power. From the modern point of view, dominated by a

scientific view of history, it may be regarded as a misfortune that he tried to construct an actual biography dictated by it, just as, from the historic point of view, we should wish a more accurate and objective narrative from the Synoptists. But there is deep meaning in the saying that the folly of God is wiser than man; and it is very reasonable to think that if the Evangelists had been by some miracle raised out of the unscientific views of history which prevailed in their time, the spiritual loss to the Church would have outweighed the material gain.

The Eternal Christ

The eternal Christ, the ever-living word of God, who spoke by the prophets of Judæa and the moralists of Greece, was revealed through the veil of the flesh by the teaching and the suffering of Jesus, but was also gradually revealed in the Christian society. As the Fourth Evangelist teaches, it was expedient for the Church that Jesus should depart in the flesh, in order that the Spirit of God should come to dwell in the society. The Evangelist saw that those who should believe without seeing were on a higher level than those who had seen; that the invisible ruler would become even more fully the Head of the society than Jesus had been when alive; that the great work of the Founder was not his teaching, nor even his suffering, but the new

orientation of the divine in relation to the human which is summed up in the word Incarnation. That the Evangelist had wholly inadequate notions as to history, though it shows him to have been quite unscientific, does not really interfere with the splendour of the revelation which he had to give to the world.

Looking at modern movements from this point of view, they change their character. We have to judge them not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. The movement of the German critics and the English literalists "back to Jesus" is from the point of view of historic science fully justified, and from the ethical point of view of great advantage, though liable to produce aberrations. At the same time we see that the strong dislike which many earnest Christians feel, for views which they consider unitarian, rests upon a real religious foundation, though it is based also on misapprehension. For if Christ is to be the centre of Christian worship, it must be the divine Christ or the purely divine in the historic Jesus. Not understanding the distinction, which the Church has ever insisted upon, between the human and the divine in Jesus, they have taken Jesus as wholly divine, and free from human limitations. By so doing they have preserved certain spiritual values, but unfortunately they have taken up a position in a house built on the sand, and in no condition

to resist the winds and the waves of historic criticism.

To divide the life of Christ into three successive periods—first, pre-existence, then a life in the world, then a period of exaltation—is only possible to those who accept the monadic view of personality, and regard time as a condition of the existence of the eternal. Such was not the view, according to the New Testament, of Jesus himself, or of the earlier preachers who thought that Jesus came into being at the nativity. It does not give us a really divine and eternal Christ, but a lofty angel who humbled himself, as we have it in the sublime poem of Milton, and generally in Arianism. We have indications of such a view in the literature of the second generation of Christians. They were feeling their way towards an explanation of the inspiration of the Christian Society, and such a view naturally presented itself to them. But it is not really the bottom of the belief of either St Paul or the Fourth Evangelist. Paul is devoted to the service not of Christ after the flesh, but of Christ after the Spirit. The Fourth Evangelist says that Christ is the light that lightens every man who comes into the world.

We can only reach the higher and more fundamental teaching of early Christianity by taking another view. As the eternal Christ is the side of God turned towards the world, God in relation

to man, so the human Jesus was an embodiment under the forms of space and time of the eternal Christ, and not under the forms of space and time only, but under local and temporary conditions, Jewish racial feelings, a very limited knowledge of the facts of nature and history, a body subject to weariness and suffering, a soul subject to moods of exultation and depression. Only in the will, and in close dependence on divine help, was Jesus a full exponent of the divine. But that consecration of the will did certainly enable him to see further into the ideas of God and the nature of human life than anyone has seen before or since. He could be mistaken, as he himself confessed, as to the time and manner of the coming of the divine kingdom. He could bitterly feel the treachery of his nearest friends. He could even for a moment shrink from coming suffering. But it was only for a moment; and the saying, "Not my will, but thy will," is the most memorable saying of all time, and the greatest crisis in the whole history of the human race.

The nature of the divinity of Jesus Christ naturally attracted those in the early centuries of our era who had been brought up on Greek philosophy; and later it furnished the Schoolmen with innumerable texts for their finely-wrought theories; but it does not greatly interest the modern mind. What is of far greater moment

in our times is the true interpretation of the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement, which have been at the basis of Christianity as received in Protestant countries. To those who think with the present writer, the doctrine of the Incarnation is fundamental. But it is a process which has always been going on. From the earliest historic times the divine ideas and impulses have been gradually moulding the world and making it a revelation of the divine order. In the life of Jesus the process took a new and a nobler form, and it has been continued down to our own days by the Christian society. To follow the divine ideas, to surrender one's own will to the will of God, to try to remould the world by the help of that will has been in all ages the purpose of Christianity. In a measure it has also been the purpose of every noble endeavour, whether within or without the Church; but the Christian inspiration has been of a special character, never separated from contact with the life of Jesus on earth, and striving ever to baptize into the life of the Eternal Christ all human activities and endeavours.

The doctrine of the Atonement also, greatly as it has been degraded and materialised in some bodies of Christians, has yet an inner meaning for all time. The external fact of the Crucifixion was combined with the internal fact of the total surrender of the will of Jesus. And on these

realities has been based the doctrine of the Atonement, which has played a great part in the history of Protestant Christianity. It seems to us unfortunate that, when he formulated the doctrine, St Paul made the Atonement of Christ correlative to the Fall of Adam. As by the sin of Adam all fell, so by the self-devotion of Christ the consequences of that primal sin were done away, and man was reconciled to God. St Paul regarded the sin and the self-sacrifice as events of history, and so they were generally accepted until the scientific notion of history prevailed. Then it was recognised that the tale of the Garden of Eden and the fall of man was not historic, but a piece of mythology, to which parallels exist in the cosmogonies of other eastern races. Yet, quite inconsistently, the Atonement was still in many quarters regarded as an event in history. The breach between God and man was regarded as mythical, but the filling of that breach was accepted as historical. This is a view which it is impossible to maintain. But if we remove both events from the field of history to the realm of religious experience, and make them stand for the natural revolt of man against divine control, and the submission of man to that control by the action of the Spirit of Christ in the heart, we may still preserve their essence in a form not liable to the attack of historic criticism.

The literal acceptance of the Pauline doctrine

of the Atonement has been a great part of that worship of the historic Jesus, which has been, beyond all denial, to many the way of salvation, an enthusiasm to raise them from a life of sin and selfishness to a place in the divine kingdom. But it is not the highest form of Christianity, nor that which has attracted the finer spirits. It is the Eternal Christ, dimly seen, through the veil of the life of the historic Jesus, which has been the inspiration of the Church, and which has enabled her often to renew her youth after ages of decay and convention.

And since Christ lives on, not only in heaven, but on earth, those of his followers who live in his life and repeat his self-devotion may also well be said to carry on and complete the process of the Atonement. As early as the prophesies of Isaiah we find the germs of the doctrine that the self-surrender of the good tends to the redemption of mankind from the power of evil. It is a great law of the spiritual world, and a law which becomes far more intelligible if we accept the view of the nature of spirit advocated in the present work. St Paul thought that his own sufferings tended to supplement the sufferings of Christ; and the same holds good of the saints of all ages. Consciously or unconsciously, we all depend for any victory over sin or any advance in the divine life, both on the free grace of God and on the results of the self-denial and self-

dedication of an innumerable host of our predecessors, who by treading the ways of self-sacrifice have made them far smoother and easier for our feet.

All this becomes clear if we try to work out the lines of Christian doctrine according to the methods of modern psychology. And we are bound to do this so far as we can. The teaching of the Gospels is that we are bound to love God not only with the heart and will, but also with the mind or intelligence (*dianoia*), and the mind of the Church has worked steadily on the problems of Christology at all periods, first in the age of the great Greek Fathers, second in the age of Scholasticism, and third, since Kant and Schleiermacher, on the lines of mental science. But the minds of most men are not mapped out in an orderly way. They are not like a photograph, or even a carefully painted landscape, but a vague scheme of lights and shades, of colours blended into a general effect. Very often an inference, which to a logical reasoner will seem evident, will appear to them to be offensive, or to be near to blasphemy. So it is, and so it must be. Strong feeling, and above all personal loyalty, will cut across the paths of thought and distort them. The Athanasian Creed says that whosoever will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. All that a modern theologian can say is, he that will think in harmony with fact and experience

must thus think of the Trinity. Those who do not care for accuracy of thought have no need to take up the subject at all.

In the narrative of the Temptation, Jesus is represented as meeting the monstrous claim to worship set forth by the Tempter with the words, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." It was an adoption, or rather an adaptation, of a fundamental phrase in the religion of Israel. But it has a meaning for modern days. For we may fairly say that in so far as the worship of the Eternal Christ is a worship of God, it is justified. But in so far as it is a worship of what was temporary and racial in Jesus, it is excluded by the Master himself. To many of the saints of the Church there has been vouchsafed what they confidently believed to be spiritual communion with their exalted Master. Some have even seen him in a vision, or heard words from him. Herein they may claim to follow in the steps of St Paul. But with St Paul they will say that it is Christ in the spirit, and not Christ after the flesh, whom they have known.

In the history of Christian doctrine we constantly find the divine ideas imperfectly embodied, mixed with temporary elements, coloured by the mists of time. Thus it has been with the idea of Christ. Some of these temporary elements we have learned to recognise, and to discern their limitations; to others most of us still cling.

The notion of the great white throne before which all nations are called to receive judgment has, considered as an anticipation of historic event, almost passed from our minds. When we read the sublime chapter in Matthew in which the last judgment is described, and even when we read St Paul's account of the general rising from the dead and what follows, we easily realise that these descriptions cover much illusion, that the final judgment is individual, not universal; and even that it is not confined to the moment of death, but is working at every stage of life. But our disillusion on some points need not make us sceptical as to the great reality of the divine judgment of life and human responsibility.

In the same way for most reflective people, the phrase of St Paul, when he speaks of his desire to depart and to be with Christ, does not seem one to be taken quite literally. They do not expect literally, when freed from the body, to come into the presence of a sublimated human Jesus. But they hope to pass into a state in which, in some way which we cannot define, the communion of their spirits with the spiritual and eternal Christ will become closer and more intimate. Their hope is based less upon the letter of Scripture than on the spiritual experience of life. To those who are able and who prefer to cling to what is illusion, no harm will come; but the illusion is only the husk, the other the grain in the husk.

Many earnest Christians have a strong dislike to Unitarian teaching: and their instinct is right, though it usually hides much confusion of thought. In a sense, every Christian is a Unitarian. None of the early disciples would have hesitated to repeat the creed of Israel, "God is one." And the Nicene Creed is quite as explicit, "I believe in one God . . . and in his son Jesus Christ, our Lord." "But," most churchmen will say, "we believe also in the divinity of Jesus Christ." The difference between the really unitarian religions, Judaism and Islam, and Christianity, lies in this, that the latter, in addition to the doctrine of the divine unity, preaches also the doctrine of the Incarnation. That is precisely the doctrine which I have ventured to try in these pages to place on a reasonable and defensible basis.

To me the whole question of Christology presents itself partly as one of fact and experience, and partly as one of theory or the explanation of fact. The facts are three: (1) the life and personality of Jesus Christ, which is a historic question, and can only be approached by historic methods; (2) the growth and inspiration of the early Church, which also we have to study in historic documents; (3) the present relation of the Spirit of Christ to Christians, which is a matter of observation and experience;—(3) is the most important, and must needs affect the study of the other two, for history apart from experience and

the beliefs based on it is a mere colourless abstraction.

How the facts of Christian experience may be explained so as to produce a reasonable Christology is a less important matter. Less important, but by no means unimportant, but important rather from the point of view of intellect than from that of practical life. The course of speculation on the subject I have, in the merest outline, sketched; and have suggested an explanation of my own, which seems to me suited to our intellectual environment. But the intellectual environment of various men is various; and I have no doubt that my explanation will only appeal to those more or less like-minded with myself. I have no pretension to set up an explanation objective or final; but only one relatively satisfactory. Nor, in fact, can an absolute doctrine on the subject be expressed in human words, since, as Bacon pointed out long ago, words cannot match the subtlety of things.

A formula enclosed in words and imposed by authority may, when it was settled, have been of great value in checking aberrations and preventing Christian ideas from being dissipated. But in time such formulæ are apt to become in part dead branches of the tree of knowledge. On the other hand, a flow of inspiration, an experience repeated in the great minds of successive generations, is like a branch which is full of sap, and is

always, as the seasons recur, putting forth fresh leaves and flowers.

It may be said, if such is the case, it were better to have no creeds at all. But this view overlooks some important considerations. If the Church repeated no creeds, she might lose sight of important questions in regard to her Founder, might suffer from want of continuity, might leave to individuals, many of whom would be uneducated and many perverted, the task of forming creeds on their own account. This would end in anarchy and general scepticism. A creed, even if it is imperfect, even if some clauses of it are quite out of date, may serve a very useful purpose by giving each generation something to start from, some venerable historic formula, of which Christians will accept all they can. It will be a curb on the licence of speculation, and hold it within bounds.

What is essential is that the creed should not be regarded as infallible, or as imposed by an authority which will not allow it to be discussed, but as a historic document, which represents and partakes of the inspiration of a great age, but which in every successive age requires fresh comment and interpretation. In a word, we may regard its authority in the same light in which we have come to regard the authority of Scripture. The great majority of English Christians regard the Bible as inspired, and as an invaluable guide

of life; but few regard it as infallible, or put it as a whole on a pedestal beyond the reach of criticism. It is thus that, until the Church has so far attained to unity that she can venture to put forth a new creed, we may well use the formulæ of Nicæa and Chalcedon. The Church of England does not put the creeds on a lower level than Scripture, but bases their claim entirely on their conformity to Scripture. Even the Roman Church, as I understand, does not at all exalt the authority of the creeds above that of Scripture.

CHAPTER IX

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The great doctrines of Christianity have in the past often been so much involved with Greek metaphysics that they have taken unreal and arbitrary forms, so completely dependent on the accepted philosophy of the age that we now find it difficult to assign any satisfactory meaning to them. The so-called Athanasian Creed, for example, is a mere piling up of contradictories which can convey to us little meaning, and it has become a very unsatisfactory subject of study, save from a purely historic point of view. But these doctrines often have an ethical side, a bearing on the practical life of the Church which has endeared them to the Christian spirit. And in that case it is nearly always possible, from the modern and scientific point of view, to find for them some justification, to discover the facts of human nature, and of the spiritual world which constituted their practical value. They cannot always by any means be taken as an expression of eternal and objective truth; but they can be shown to have at least true aspects.

I propose to consider in this light in the present

chapter the doctrine of the Divine Spirit, as in the last chapter the doctrine of the Eternal Christ. As I have maintained in the last chapter, in the early Church these two doctrines were alternative, or perhaps mutually complementary, attempts to explain the same phenomenon, the sudden flooding of the world, at the beginning of our era, with a new light from above. The two doctrines appealed each to a somewhat different kind of mind and spirit. And in our days also the two doctrines are in a great degree alternative : it is not easy to imagine a spiritual consciousness in which they both find a full place. Either may be a divine light to lead to salvation.

But there is from the historic and philosophic point of view, if not from the side of practice and conduct, a decided difference between the two views. The doctrine of the Eternal Christ could only have arisen after the human life of the Saviour had passed, and belonged exclusively to the Christian society. The doctrine of the Divine Spirit was long before that time accepted by the Jewish people. It grew with the spiritual growth of the people. And it was certainly accepted by the Saviour himself, and is repeatedly mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels.

I should mention, but I need hardly more than mention, the two occasions on which in the New Testament the Holy Spirit is spoken of as appearing in visible form. When Jesus was

baptised by John the Baptist it is stated in Mark and Matthew that he saw the Spirit in the form of a dove descending upon him. Luke characteristically omits the words which suggests a mere vision, and writes, "The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him." The Fourth Evangelist transfers the vision to John, and adds that the Spirit abode upon Jesus. We have evidently here the germ of the view adopted by some parties in the Church, that the incarnation began, not before the birth of Jesus, but at his baptism, a view which developed into what was called the Adoptionist Christology.

On the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were gathered together, there was a sound as of a mighty wind, and cloven tongues of fire settled upon each of them. It would be a vain task to try to ascertain what particular facts or appearances gave birth to these tales. And it is quite unnecessary to do so, since throughout the Gospels the Holy Spirit is spoken of, not as a separate being, but as a divine impulse or influence which dwelt first in the Master and later in the disciples.

In the Gospel of Luke [1] we read, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

In the parallel passage in Matthew the phrase ends somewhat differently, "How much more

[1] xi. 13.

shall your Father which is in heaven give *good things* to them that ask him." It is needless to enquire which of these phrases gives us the very words of our Lord; or whether, as seems very probable, both were used by him on different occasions; for the words in Luke undoubtedly belong to the very essence of the earliest Christianity. That God is accessible to man, and that the Spirit of God speaks and acts in and through man, is one of those primary teachings without which the doctrine of Christ would lose all meaning, and human life all divine consecration.

Among the disciples, shortly after their Lord had gone up, the term Holy Spirit acquired a somewhat more definite meaning, being used to indicate the divine inspiration which belonged specially to the members of the society, which guided their councils, which accompanied their missionary journeys from city to city, giving them power of speech and a faculty to cure diseases and expel evil spirits. But the Divine Spirit did not even then in their belief begin his working in the world after the Master had departed. In old time the Spirit had spoken through the Prophets and guided the rulers of Israel, only entering on a clearer and stronger revelation of the things of God when God had sent his Son unto the world to teach and to redeem it.

I have to speak in the first instance of the

imparting of the Divine Spirit in relation to individuals; later I will say something of it in relation to the Christian Church. We may all allow that in the assembly or communion of Christians the Spirit will be more clearly manifested than to individuals. Yet it is as individuals, and as individuals only, that men can feel in their hearts the stress of divine inspiration, and through individuals it must pass to the society.

St James, the most purely Jewish of all the writers of the New Testament, writes: "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights." And no one can be familiar with the Jewish Scriptures without knowing that this quite accords with their teaching. In the beginning, when earth was a chaos, the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, setting in motion those vital forces which brought into existence the beautiful visible world. This naturally reminds us of the almost identical saying of the Greek Anaxagoras, that it was reason or purpose which brought the orderly world out of chaos. In the earlier books of the Bible we read that it was the Spirit of God which gave Bezalel, the son of Uri, wisdom and skill to devise cunning works in gold and silver, and in the cutting of wood, and in all manner of workmanship: that it was the Spirit of God which gave Samson a strength which was more than human: that it was the Spirit of God

which gave courage and military skill to Joshua, the son of Nun, that he might vanquish the peoples of Canaan. We are at a higher and less primitive level when we read how God gave to Solomon the spirit of wisdom, so that he excelled all who preceded and all who came after him. But a still loftier tone is to be found in some of the Psalms, as when the poet writes: "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." And the consummation is reached in a passage of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Every one will remember how this proclamation was taken for a text by our Lord, when he began to proclaim his mission: it is a glorious bond to bind together the Old and the New Testament, and probably every great reformer and preacher in the whole history of Christianity has felt that he might venture to think that in a far less degree, yet in a real sense, he could apply the sacred words to his own mission.

Thus there is, beginning with the documents of the Jewish Scriptures, passing on into Christianity, and continued in the history of the Christian Church, what one may venture to call a progressive or evolutional doctrine of the Divine Spirit, and of the working of the Spirit among men.

In the life of Charles Darwin there is a passage interesting in this connection. He has recorded that when he was a boy he was a swift runner, and at the time he attributed this swiftness of foot to the direct help of God. In later life this seemed to him fanciful; and so no doubt it would appear to most people. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which his boyish faith was truer to fact and experience than his later scepticism. If every good gift is from above, suppleness in the limbs may be helped by an inner motion of the Spirit. We do not at all know the limits of the working of what is within upon the bodily powers. It was natural that when his life was wholly given to the investigation of the orderly sequences of nature, Darwin should have become obtuse to the powers of the Spirit. Another confession of his puts this in a clear light. He says that in later life he lost the power of appreciating poetry, so that even the plays of Shakespeare did not appeal to him. That also is a not unnatural tendency in one whom we may call a fanatic of science. But in this case fewer people would think his change of nature one for the better, for nearly all of us regard the appreciation of poetry not as a limitation but as an extension of life. Those who do a great work in the world often in the course of their strenuous career become stunted on some sides of their nature, suffer from some kind of

intellectual or moral atrophy. So, without in the least blaming Darwin, we may well hold that his boyish belief in divine aid was anything but a mere delusion.

Alike in the history of the Church, and in recent writings, there may be seen two different conceptions of the direct influence of the Divine Spirit on men. According to one view it is beneath consciousness, in the unconscious strata of our being, that God especially works. This one may call the mystic view. It holds that only as a man throws aside personality, desire, purpose, and lays his spirit passively bare to the higher impulses which come from above, only then will the Divine Spirit use him as an instrument, and communicate to him the deep things of God. This is expressed in innumerable passages of such works as the *Imitatio Christi* and the *Theologia Germanica.*

And this view is true, and based on the experience of many. But it is only one side of the truth, and the other side is also very important. The unconscious side of man is open not only to Divine influences and inspirations, but also to sinister and evil influences of a spiritual character. Anyone who reads the lives of the Saints will see how constantly they have had to strive against evil suggestions surging up from below. Their life was a continual struggle, which sometimes still continued when in the opinion of

the world sainthood was attained. And it is obvious to anyone who reads the New Testament, that side by side with Divine inspiration, diabolic inspiration besets men's souls. The two kinds of inspiration differ as heaven from hell; and yet we know that saints have been hard put to it sometimes to determine whether impulses which came into their spirits were from above or from below. And when Jesus himself was questioned on this point the only test which he gave was a practical one, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" "Ye shall know them by their fruits." "Beloved," writes the Fourth Evangelist, "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God."

Thus, though no one who believes at all in Divine inspiration can doubt that many of its greatest expressions, in word and feeling and deed, work through the unconscious, yet we are compelled to treat what is thus originated with extreme care, and it is healthy to regard it even with some suspicion.

The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, that monument of the good sense of the Church in the second century, gives very sane directions as to the way in which teachers who claim a personal inspiration should be tested. "Not every one," it says, "that speaketh in the spirit is a prophet; but only, if he have the behaviour of the Lord. Whosoever saith in the spirit, Give me money or

any other things, ye shall not hearken to him." It is clear that even thus early men false and covetous had claimed to be prophets. Nor can we set them aside as mere pretenders and hypocrites: probably most of them believed in their mission; but the sources of it in the unconscious levels of the mind were contaminated with base elements, desire of predominance or desire of gain.

In England and America in recent times we have had an abundance of men who have claimed inspiration, such as the notable Mr Harris, who for a time dominated that fine spirit, Lawrence Oliphant. But the tests of the *Didachê* would be fatal to nearly all of them. Few indeed of them show the behaviour of the Lord. And certainly, especially in America, they ask for money. We hear of great fortunes being acquired by the founders of religious societies. And in countries where the acquisition of money is the supreme test of success it is not unnatural that the leaders who succeed in heaping it up should be regarded as justified by that fact. But the *Didachê* is right after all. As Socrates knew well, and as most high-minded men have seen ever since, the acceptance of a reward in money for spiritual advice, unless it be in the way of a regular salary paid by some organised church, at once degrades the character of that help. Those who require fees for spiritual service have their reward. Very different was the procedure of

St. Paul, who lived by his manual work, that he might give the rest of his time freely to the work of his ministry. In this feeling Socrates and he are at one.

The majority of mankind, and I would venture to say the vast majority of women, are more under the influence of emotion than of reason. And emotion arises out of, and primarily belongs to, the unconscious strata of our being. Thus it is usual, when communications of the Divine Spirit are spoken of, to regard such communications as addressed primarily to the emotions. In the phenomena of conversion, which have specially been a subject of study by modern psychology, emotion is the most prominent feature. The sense of sin, the feeling of a need of deliverance, the scorn of one's own righteousness, and an eager desire to throw oneself on the eternal righteousness, such emotions, sometimes leading in their intensity to fainting and even to collapse, are familiar to those who have studied religious revivals. Such phenomena have accompanied the preaching of Christianity from the earliest times, and the first Christians were accustomed, as are many in our day, to see in these paroxysms of moral crisis the direct working of the Spirit of God. The abnormal accompaniments of conversion, the speaking in unknown tongues, faith-healing, and the like, impressed them, as they

impressed St Luke, because they were striking and unusual; and it is a natural human tendency to realise the working of God rather in the abnormal than in the normal. But that working may be discerned as well in the life of every day as in the times of spiritual stress; and when it acts upon the conscious strata of a man, it acts upon all the elements which compose it, touching the part of it which is best into a new and higher life, giving wisdom to the intelligence, high ideals to the artist, an untiring energy of will to the practical reformer. It takes man, as he is and has become, and raises him to a higher power and efficiency. It acts less upon the emotions and the imagination, and more upon the intelligence and the practical faculties.

It will at once be seen that the view of inspiration last mentioned is also in accord with the old Jewish usage, though the more mystic and external kind of inspiration is perhaps more often mentioned in Jewish scripture. The sons of the Prophets often showed the supernatural influence in ecstatic utterances, and Saul when he met them caught the infection. The nature of the calling is made clear in the prophecy of Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdman, and a dresser of sycamore trees; and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophecy unto my

people Israel." So Jeremiah says,[1] "If I say I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I am weary with forbearing, and cannot contain." But besides this emotional and ecstatic kind of inspiration we find also one which has closer relationship to wisdom in thought and good sense in action. As I have already observed, the warlike skill of a Joshua and the wisdom of a Solomon are in the Bible regarded as quite as much the fruits of divine inspiration as the more passionate utterances of the Prophets. The Jewish nation was regarded as the subject of special divine guidance, and the qualities in its leaders and heroes which helped it towards its divinely appointed goal were regarded as imparted by the Spirit of God. This fact opens to us fresh vistas, as to which more presently.

But the particular kind of inspiration on which I wish specially now to insist is the divine illumination of the intellect. That there is a wisdom which is bestowed from above is dwelt on largely in both Psalms and Proverbs. The spirit of God and the wisdom of God seem to some of the writers to be the same. "The Lord," says the author of Proverbs,[2] "giveth wisdom: he layeth up sound wisdom for the upright." "Thou shalt make me to know wisdom,"[3] writes the Psalmist.

[1] xx. 9. [2] ii. 6, 7. [3] Ps. li. 6.

"If any man lack wisdom," writes St James, "let him ask of God." And he further defines this wisdom: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits."

Wisdom may be shown either in the conduct of life or in an eminently true and sane view of realities. As regards practical conduct, it is notable how sane and wise were some of the mystic saints of the Middle Ages, such as Catharine and Theresa. In the interesting life of Brother Lawrence we find an exquisitely simple account of the way in which, being naturally one of the most awkward and unpractical of men, he found a way to do the duties of life quite well by a constant and complete reliance on prayer and on the love of God. When a man or a woman is emptied alike of self-seeking and of self-consciousness, the eyes are wonderfully cleared to see what is the right thing to do.

When the wisdom is theoretic in matters of science and thought, there is still a possibility of aid from the Divine Spirit. That aid does not, of course, give a student knowledge of matters which he has not studied, or place an unlearned man on the level of a learned man. It does not inform us in matters which it is our business and duty to find out for ourselves. But it helps in some directions, provided we are ready on our part to work with it.

I venture to suggest that the discovery of the unconscious element in life, and of its importance, may throw a new light not only on the development of character and the sway of the emotions, but even on the intellectual working of the student and the search for truth by the man of science. We are not, even in intelligence, so isolated as we fancy ourselves. In actual research and discovery a great part is played by the unconscious. It has often happened to those who research that the solutions which they had vainly sought in days of toil have suddenly, in a quiet moment, been found written out, so to speak, in the tablets of the mind. In the same way it has often happened that those who have long sought in vain to decide which of the courses of action open to them is the really wise and good one, have suddenly seen clearly what is the only wise and right course to pursue. In all these cases the new decision comes from what has taken place in the unconscious levels of personality. And it is in these unconscious levels that spiritual influence most usually acts, influence whose course we cannot trace; but when the result is the discovery of new truth or the revelation of a good and right course of action, we naturally look upon such an influence as coming from the super-conscious, as proceeding, whether mediately or immediately, from the Ruler of the spiritual world.

There is an intellectual quality which is most notable in the votaries of science, and which is parallel to idealism in the poet and the artist, or to high goodness in the social worker. This is the quality called by Huxley the fanaticism of veracity, which John Stuart Mill exhibited in a high degree. It is not always appreciated, indeed it is often in popular estimation regarded as a kind of egotism : yet it has been of inestimable value in the progress of knowledge.

To set aside a favourite theory because it is found to be in conflict with fact and reality may, to a man who leads a keenly intellectual life, need as much self-denial and self-mastery as the giving up of a personal pleasure or desire when it is seen to conflict with the general good. To allow one's views in history or politics to be warped by unworthy prejudice or by self-interest is a parallel proceeding to allowing one's own enjoyments to injure either one's neighbours or society in general.

St Paul, whose strong good sense is almost as noteworthy as his spiritual enthusiasm, teaches clearly that the intellect is as much subject to divine inspiration as the emotions and heart. There are, he says, diversities of gifts, but the same spirit ; diversities of working, but the same God. To one Christian is given, by the Spirit, the power to work healing or to speak with tongues. But these more ecstatic revelations

St Paul puts very low down in the scale of attainments. To others, he says, the Spirit gives faith. But higher still he places the wisdom and the knowledge imparted by the Spirit; these he speaks of as the crown of the Christian calling.[1] I do not, of course, mean that in this passage St Paul arranges the gifts of the Spirit in an exact order of merit. But it is at least noteworthy that when he is writing of these spiritual gifts the first that comes to his mind is wisdom. And the high rank which he assigns to wisdom is no mere speculative opinion. In his life and his letters nothing is more conspicuous than the way in which he adapts his teaching to his environment, allows for all the differences in temperament and circumstances of his converts, and tries to make the enthusiasm of their faith work in harness. In one place he writes: "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also"; and still more strongly, "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in (an unknown) tongue!" Even the working of miracles, whether by himself or others, he places at a lower level than the gift of divine wisdom.

St Paul in fact accepts, and baptizes into Christ, the doctrine of the Old Testament in regard to the working of the Spirit of God. And

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 8.

the Fourth Evangelist, when he speaks of Jesus Christ as the Logos, the reason or purpose of God, likewise transposes the Jewish doctrine into a Christian key; but he thinks less of the Old Testament than of the Jewish modification of the doctrines of later Hellenism.

It was a splendid tradition, and never wholly abandoned by the Church. The great intellectual teachers of the Church, Clement of Alexandria, Augustine, Jerome, were put high in the lists of saints. And in the Middle Ages, St Thomas Aquinas, the great thinker, who was in his time attacked as a heretic, but who lived to baptize Aristotle into Christ, is one of the chief of the saints. But just as in his unconscious part man is in danger of being misled by impulses from below, so in his conscious work he may be attacked by baser motives, the desire to please particular people, inordinate love of paradox and novelty, indolence, and many other messengers of Satan which lie in wait to mislead the investigator.

Is such a man not inspired, in spite of all shortcomings, by the light that lighteth every man that comes into the world? Would that we could free ourselves from cant, and see things as they truly are in their right proportions!

I must not be misunderstood. It is not mere ability, nor mere success and fame, which is the basis of such wisdom, but humbleness, courage, patience, a keen desire that the ways of God be

known, and the happiness of man furthered. And these qualities may exist in any degree, from a merely conventional tendency to a burning enthusiasm. And even in that form they do not usually lead a man to objective and eternal truth; but they lead him to a high degree of relative truth, truth good for the time and country.

I think that there is no subject in the whole range of Christian teaching which more needs dwelling on than the relations of the Divine Spirit to the intellect. The tendency of religious movements in the last century, Methodism, the Salvation Army, Quakerism, and of all the religious sects which spring up like mushrooms in England and America, has been to lay undue stress on feeling and emotion. They have taught that the sum of religion lies in a right attitude of the heart to God, that purity of motive makes a good man, that if anyone is ready to do the will of God, he will not find much difficulty in ascertaining what that will is. This is undoubtedly an important side of religion, and from the individual point of view the most important side. The right relation of the will to God leads to life and peace. But on the social side of religion the intelligence is quite as important as the will. Moved by religious emotion, often by a strong feeling of love and brotherhood, men are constantly, through want of thought and a consideration of the consequences of action, led into

doing what is disastrous to society. They dwell upon certain phrases in the teaching of early Christianity, and pass by the correctives which, as I have shown, are abundantly to be found in the Bible. God does not love fools; and it is of the essence of folly to act upon mere impulse without carefully considering the results of one's action. The indulgence of impulses of compassion without consideration is often the cause of great misery: the momentary alleviation of distress may be succeeded by far greater distress, not to speak of the destruction of morale.

In a primitive state of society, especially in one where a callous selfishness prevails, the practice of kindness and charity is the highest form of duty. But in a complicated, and in many ways degenerate, polity like ours, these impulses need to be kept under severe control, not quenched, but disciplined, educated by the careful consideration of consequences, as ascertained by careful investigation. Often the only wise course of conduct repels one by its seeming harshness. In such cases there is a contest between good sense and conscience on the one side, and our feelings of love, of compassion, of humanity, on the other. And religion, not merely popular religion, but the highest exponents of religion among us, usually take the side of emotion against wisdom. We do not sufficiently realise that wisdom, the divine logos, is as much a part of the

divine being as love. And if, probably as the result of painful experiences, we determine to take the side of the head rather than of the heart, we feel pained and unhappy. It is a sad state of things brought about by one-sided views of our religious teachers, and only to be remedied by a change in their outlook, a change which must come sooner or later, if society is to be saved from dissolution, but a change which most of us will feel to be depressing and chilling. It will be brought about by progress in science, both natural and human, which will make us aware that God rules by law; and that we can only live in the world which he has made by conforming our impulses to the conditions which are imposed upon us by the Divine Will.

However, St Paul sometimes speaks in another key, and depreciates what he calls "the wisdom of the world" in comparison with the foolishness of the message of the Gospel. "The world by wisdom," he writes, "knew not God." One sees his meaning. Used as he was to the discussions in the Greek agoras with Stoics, Epicureans, and others, he grew impatient with their blindness to some of the spiritual realities to which he was intensely alive, with their smug conviction that they understood all about good and evil, and therefore had no need for purification by the fire of religion. St Paul was convinced that, as he had a purer faith, so he reached to a really

higher phase of wisdom than that of Hellenistic philosophy. As a Jew he would scarcely realise to what extent the Platonic philosophy was destined, when baptized into Christ, to enrich the thought of the Church.

That is the point at which we have arrived. The doctrine of the Divine Spirit has its roots in very early prehistoric times. It was placed by the Jewish religion on a far higher level. But it yet needed a baptism into Christ before it could become what it did become to the early Christian Church, and to the Christian society at all times. Schleiermacher thought that he could substitute for the working of the Spirit in the Church what he calls the Gemeingeist, the corporate feeling, of that Church. But the point was that the corporate feeling of the Church was permeated and inspired by an incoming spiritual power, arising from that new orientation of the spiritual world consequent on the death of Christ, and his rising again in the experience and in the hearts of Christians, of which I have already spoken. It was a new phase or aspect, a fuller revelation of the Spirit of God, to which they were witnesses.

That there should have been at a definite period in the history of the world such a new revelation is quite in accordance with what geology and history alike reveal as to God's way of dealing with the world. Geological research

reveals to us long periods of little and gradual change, when existing races of animals and plants slowly developed and by degrees became better accommodated to their surroundings. Then from time to time there has been a crisis in which there has been, not indeed a new and special creation, nor a suspension of natural law, but a marked quickening of the pace of evolution, following probably on great changes of environment, the result of which has been the arising of a new order. So it has been in the vast spaces which preceded history. And so it has been, perhaps in a somewhat less startling degree, at certain crises in the few centuries which are all about which history can tell us anything. It is as if an iceberg which we had been looking at were suddenly, not in defiance of the law of gravity, but in consequence of its slow working on unseen parts of the mass of ice, to turn over and to show to us fresh forms.

It was no wonder that, to the first disciples, the working of the Divine Spirit in their midst seemed something quite new and unprecedented, something quite peculiar to their society and hostile to the world about them. But we, looking from a greater distance, and with more full historic knowledge, can see that what took place was a development on new lines of a known power, and not the sudden advent of a power wholly new. Some, indeed, of the writers of

the New Testament had already discerned this: the writer to the Hebrews when he observes that God had revealed himself by the Prophets before he revealed himself in his Son. And St Paul at times seems to maintain that the divine mission of the Church and the divine education of Israel were really two parts of the same process. That the inspiration of Plato and Zeno and Aristotle was in fact another phase of the process we, naturally, could not expect him to see.

The Fourth Evangelist well expresses the new revelation of the Spirit when he writes: "The Spirit shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." Through the Spirit the main principles of the teaching and the obedience of Jesus were to be spread abroad in the world, the realisation of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man, the dominance in the world of the spiritual over the material, the duty of bringing in the divine kingdom. These great principles, by the urgency of the Divine Spirit, were to be revealed to the minds of men, impressed upon their hearts and made into their rule of action. And whether we say that these results came from the activity of the Spirit or from communion with the Eternal Christ, seems to me not indeed unimportant, but a matter decided by education and temperament, according as the teaching of the Third or the Fourth Evangelist most fully impresses us.

But in the view of Schleiermacher as to the *Gemeingeist* there is at all events thus much of truth that, however much the gift of the Spirit may impress individuals, it belongs primarily to the community. But a development of this point must be reserved to a later chapter.

The difficult question of personality which is fundamental to this treatise is not in the present connection important. For few Christians think of the Divine Spirit as personal. In the Creeds we read of him as a third personality, besides the Father and the Son. But the belief in the case of most people probably stops with the Creed. He is not regarded, as by many Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mother are regarded, as individual, but rather as an aspect or influence of God. And as we are concerned less with what men say they believe, or think they believe, than with what conduct shows them to believe, we need not pursue the subject.

The dogma of the Trinity has become a sort of shibboleth of orthodoxy, and is dragged in, in most incongruous places in our services. For example, it is repeated at the end of every Psalm, apparently as an attempt to convert it from Judaism to Christianity. This may be better than attempts to amend the Psalms themselves, but it is incongruous. The fact is, that the dogma is a conventional and scholastic summary of doctrines which have in themselves great

value, but which gain little from being tied up in a bundle. What these doctrines may in reason be said to be, I have tried to set forth. Others would no doubt set them forth differently.

We can hardly do better than come back to the view expressed in Jeremy Taylor's *Eirenicon*, which is thus summed up by Professor Dowden :[1] "We may amuse ourselves with essences and hypostasies and personalities, distinctions without difference, priority in coequalities, and unity in pluralities, and may be none the wiser. But the good man who feels the power of the Father, he to whom the Son is become wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, he in whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is spread; he, though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, alone understands the mystery of the Holy Trinity."

[1] *Puritan and Anglican*, p. 213.

CHAPTER X

PERSONAL IMMORTALITY AND ETERNAL LIFE

I

PRIMITIVE VIEWS

THE ultimate element in our personality, the "spark of divine fire," which is the active element in our being, in the course of life grows weary with contending against the obstacles which clog it on all sides; or else some sudden catastrophe makes the body no longer subservient to its impulses. Then comes the great crisis which we call death.

We all know what becomes of the body at death. It soon becomes corrupt, and loses all form. Finally, it is resolved into elements which may enter into the life of fresh beings, animal or vegetable. The early Christians believed in the resurrection, not only of the body, but of the flesh, that is, in the reconstitution of the material frame. But of course this notion involves enormous difficulties, and it is probably extinct among those who reflect.[1] St Paul's doctrine of

[1] Mr H. D. A. Major's vigorous work, *A Resurrection of Relics*, shows clearly how completely this belief has died away in the minds of religious leaders.

the transformation of the material body into a spiritual body stands on a very different footing, and is still widely accepted. It is a theory intended to explain the survival of the personality in which a great proportion of mankind has believed in the past and still believes.

On this problem the whole question of personal immortality, or the future life of the individual, hinges. I am speaking at present not of the theories of philosophers, but of the beliefs of mankind in general—anyone who hopes to live beyond the grave thinks precisely of his personality as persisting, with its memory, its loves and hatreds, its formed habits of thought and action, its aspirations and energies. Apart from the longing for a continuation of the personal life, the question of immortality would only interest a few of the more refined and intellectual. There is no possibility of saving the body. But every man as far back in history as we can trace mankind, and as far as we can observe in all regions of the world, is interested, so far as he rises above the mere daily battle for existence, in the continued existence of his personality after death. Sometimes he merely accepts, without thinking, the views on the subject current in his circle or his Church. Sometimes he vigorously rejects the notion of a future life. Sometimes he takes refuge in a settled agnosticism. But the interest of mankind in the matter is really

so keen, that any religious teacher who professes to have new light on the matter gains an immense and an eager audience. And any person who professes as a medium to have intercourse with the souls of the departed is besieged by inquirers, who only fall away when they are convinced that the supposed new light is only an *ignis fatuus*.

The primitive religions of the world have usually maintained that personality survives death. But the survival which they teach is by no means an attractive one; it consists of a colourless and uninteresting reflection or repetition of the old life. The hunter still hunts; the agriculturalist still ploughs his fields; the great chiefs still exercise lordship in the realm of shades; but it is all done in an unreal fashion. No one would prefer such an existence to the vigorous and stirring life of the present. It is a sort of *pis aller*, better than nothing. Besides this, however inconsistently, the more notable dead were identified with the spirits of the earth and the underworld, who frequently intervened in the daily events of life, and whom it was necessary to propitiate with sacrifice and rite. Communion with the dead became the task or the privilege of a special class of sorcerers or medicine-men, who by the aid of such office became very powerful persons in the tribe.

The primitive notions of paganism survived

in Europe down to the last century in the respect or fear which the country people have felt for wizard or witch, who were in touch either with the dead or with spirits, and who were powerful to harm or on occasion to help those with whom they had contact. And no sooner had these superstitions died down than their place was taken by other mediators or mediums who made a business of establishing communication with the departed.

The phenomena of spiritism, of the modern attempt, through the agency of certain sensitive mediums, to come into contact with the departed, have revealed to us many hitherto unappreciated facts as regards both matter and mind. Thought transference, and the direct influence, apart from physical communication, of one person on another seems to be proved by an enormous induction. And it cannot be doubted, further, that certain sensitive persons, when in a state of trance, have access to mines of knowledge which lie outside the horizon of their conscious lives. There is in these experiences much which is very hard to explain; and the explanation of which may greatly affect our outlook on the universe.

From the point of view of psychology and of religion, I think that the beliefs of spiritists have been perverted by what may be called the monadic theory of personality,—the view that if

the spirit survives death it will survive with the features of the present life unchanged, with the experiences and knowledge of the present life still current. The influences, whatever they be, which come into contact with, and express themselves through, the mediums, seem above all things anxious to establish their identity with beings who have lived on the earth in the past. Any information they give as to the world beyond the grave is of the most superficial and flimsy description. Whence these communications come is at present an unsolved problem. But their source, whatever it be, is a purely mundane one.

In fact, the nature of the communicators in spiritist circles is dominated by the views current in those circles. Sometimes they are personalities who have lived, or are supposed to have lived, on earth; sometimes they are tricky and untrustworthy earth-spirits; sometimes, according to their own confession, they are evil spirits on the watch to deceive and destroy those who trust in them. The communications themselves are almost never of really ethical character, tending to stimulate the souls of survivors and help them in the battle of life. They have no relation to the course of conduct, severe, self-denying, aspiring: but rather foster a flabby and unreal sentimentality. In essence they are of the same class as the communications made in

past days by witches and necromancers. And one remembers that on such communications through history war has been made by every religion worthy of the name. In the Jewish code we find the command, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Necromancy and magic put out all their force against the rising power of Christianity. And in the great revival of Christianity in the sixteenth century, magic and witchery arose like dark shadows cast by the light of the sun.

There are certain things which are made clear, alike by the history of the belief in a future life and the experiences of modern spiritualism. Personal survival of death is not easily thought of apart from continuance of consciousness and memory. A consciousness which has forgotten its past is not intelligible. And consciousness with memory has been regarded as implying a body of some kind. Early Christianity intensely believed in the resurrection of the body, either in cruder or in more refined form. St Paul taught the transformation of the earthly body at the resurrection into a spiritual body, though he evades the question what the spiritual body will be like. "God giveth it a body as it has pleased him." The modern schools believe in something scarcely more definite, a rarified or astral body, to be in reference to human senses very much like the old physical body, but devoid of its coarser properties, and holding a new

relation to space. That such a body is immortal, or the instrument of an immortal personality, is not necessarily implied. But it is implied that it survives bodily death, and continues beyond the grave many functions for which the physical body had been necessary,—memory, thought, affection.

For this notion of a non-material body, religion in India usually substitutes the notion of metempsychosis, or the transference of the soul into another body, human or animal, accompanied by its *karma*, or the fruit of past lives. Only after many such transferences does the soul wear out, or attain to that neutral and unconscious state called in Buddhism, *nirvana*. The strong point of this teaching is that it suggests ways in which all good or evil deeds done in the body may be rewarded or punished by the very nature of the transfer into happy or unhappy circumstances. The weak point of it is, that it cannot in any satisfactory way establish by evidence the continuity of consciousness from one embodiment to another. The tales of the sages, who have known in what bodily form they dwelt before they attained to their later form, are quite unconvincing. Therefore the teaching has to be taken on faith, a faith in a natural law of spirit which cannot be proved. Yet it is held, we are told, quite without doubt, by the masses of the people in such countries as India.

II

Modern Popular Views

The experiences of the late war, with its slaughter of thousands of our best and most energetic young men, has naturally led survivors to think much of the state of the departed. In some instances it seems to have caused a reversion to very primitive notions of survival. I have heard of a Bishop speaking as a pagan might speak of the playing-fields of heaven. Many have betaken themselves to the spiritist mediums ; and some may have found real satisfaction in that quarter. The members of various religious bodies have sought satisfaction in the doctrines in regard to the future life current in those bodies.

But the mediæval teaching as to heaven, hell, and purgatory is undoubtedly among us in a greatly enfeebled condition. How far the Roman Church may be able to procure in the mass of her members a real belief in the mediæval doctrine, I cannot venture to say. But outside the Roman communion there has been going on for a long time a continuous weakening in that doctrine. Belief in purgatory disappeared at the Reformation, because with the doctrine of purgatory some of the worst abuses of the dominant Church had been associated. Among the Protestants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the terrific alternative of heaven and

hell stood waiting at the doors of the future life. So long as they were really believed in, one could not imagine a more stringent stimulus to virtue or a more deterrent hindrance to vice and infidelity. But as the primitive sternness of Calvinism died down, the places of future reward and punishment were taken less seriously. Within the memory of some of us, to deny the eternity of punishment was to risk persecution for heresy. In an interesting recent biography, that of Rev. C. Hargrove, we read that it was his growing disbelief in this tenet which made him abandon the Church of Rome, of which otherwise he was a contented votary. But now one scarcely ever hears, in sermons or books, any advocacy of the doctrine of eternal punishment. Perhaps in places the doctrine of corrective or temporary punishment is substituted, that is to say, the doctrine of purgatory is revived. But it must be evident to every observer that the question of future punishment is kept as far as possible out of sight. When the life beyond the grave is spoken of, it is almost always spoken of as one of great happiness. In a word, the whole Christian doctrine of the future life has been merged in groundless imaginations, and flooded by unreal sentiment. There is very little real belief at the basis of it. A milk-and-water doctrine that at death all except the desperately bad are carried by angels to heaven, and that an

all-loving Deity takes no account of their good or evil deeds, but pardons all indiscriminately, is so utterly at variance with the facts of the present life, and with all the principles of morality, that it can have no real value, and is quite unfit to provide armour to the soul in times of danger and stress.

The fact is, that no one has been able to sketch any kind of future life for the individual, the prospect of which, if it be extended to infinity, will attract a reasonable man. Our ancestors spoke of the heavenly life as one long Sabbath, but we, who find that a too quiet Sunday begins to be oppressive, smile at the phrase. But those who have tried to substitute other imaginations have fared no better. Young men and women, in the ardour of first love, speak of that love as one that will last for ever. Very often it cools or evaporates in a few years or weeks. Men and women who have experienced the happiness which comes from works of active benevolence, are apt to think that an eternity of such work will be satisfactory. But no kind of individual existence known to us would last very long without becoming oppressive. The fable of Tithonus, who acquired immortality, and soon began to envy those who were mortal, has deep meaning. People who are growing elderly will easily appreciate it.

I am acquainted with one learned and very

intellectual man, who thinks that an eternity may well be spent in the constant acquisition of fresh knowledge, in diving deeper and deeper into the laws of the physical world and the history of mankind. Probably many exceptional men would mention some activity, mental or practical, of which they think they could never be wearied. I knew a young poet who held that much of the happiness of the future life would come from the acting of the plays of Shakespeare. But evidently such fancies as these are nothing but illusion.

The flimsiness of the popular beliefs as to the future life, combined with the restless and pleasure-loving character of modern society, has tended more and more to thrust the whole question of the survival of death into the background. While only a few would explicitly deny its possibility, the many think of it as little as they can, except perhaps when they know that they are involved with a mortal disease or when they live a life of constant danger. They throw themselves with energy into the current of the present, into the relations of the family, into duty or amusement, and try to disregard the dark shadow which, as they are dimly aware, looms in the background.

III

Earliest Christian Views

When we compare the teaching of the New Testament in regard to the future life with that

of other religions, we are struck with its indistinctness. In some of the religions of the Far East we find most detailed accounts of the realm beyond the grave, with its pleasures and its tortures. Much of this imagery seems to have filtered through into the beliefs of the mystic sects of Greece and Rome. The Elysian fields or the Islands of the Blest for the good, the punishments of Tartarus for the wicked, were quite familiar to the imagination of the ancient world. They are enshrined for us in the great poems of Homer and Virgil. At Delphi they were represented to the eyes of pilgrims in a greatly softened and refined form in the paintings of Polygnotus. They were probably set forth in dramatic form to the votaries of Demeter at Eleusis. The Koran contains detailed accounts of the torments of hell reserved for the wicked, the covetous, and those who charge the Koran with falsehood; while sensuous pictures are drawn of the delights and rewards of the faithful, and especially of those who die in battle for the faith.

Of all this there is nothing in the earliest Christian documents. There are parables such as that of Dives and Lazarus and of the sheep and the goats before the throne, but no descriptions of the future life. Even St Paul concludes his argument for the future life with the words: "When this corruptible shall have put on

incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." And in the other passage in regard to the future life in 1 *Thessalonians* he sums up, "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." The Apocalypse, of course, gives us more detail, but it is a work which was with great difficulty admitted to the canon of Scripture, and does not represent the earliest teaching.

When a leading question as to the future life was put to Jesus, "Lord, are they few that be saved?" he turned it aside in a very characteristic way in a practical direction, "Strive to enter in by the narrow door." There is, however, in the Gospels one passage of considerable importance on the matter.

Modernists cannot cite the reported sayings of Jesus as quite conclusive in matters like these. They know too well how easily the words of the great Master might be corrupted in transmission or distorted by events in the history of the early Church. And even when we seem to reach actual utterances of the Saviour, we know that they were not uninfluenced by the conditions and the mental outlook of the time. It would be fatal to take them as infallible, or as finally settling vexed questions. So it is; and no wise man would wish that it should be otherwise; for in the shadow of any infallibility man becomes

a mere parasite, and begins at once to degenerate. Yet for all Christians the sayings of their Master will have a weight far greater than that of any utterance of any disciple of his.

There is a saying of Jesus in regard to the future life which has the strongest objective claim on our reverence. For it occurs in closely similar words in all the Synoptic Gospels. Few, indeed, of the recorded words of the Master have so strong a claim to be regarded as authentic. The Sadducees thought that they had contrived a trap for Jesus, discovered a puzzle which he could not solve, in their question as to the woman who had had seven husbands. "In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven, for they all had her to wife?" The answer is clear and final, "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." There is here, as in many of the sayings of Jesus, something belonging to the time and the state of mind at the time, yet its fundamental truth is but emphasised by modern discovery.

In this case the local and temporary element in the teaching of our Lord may be easily discerned.

We have of late learned, from the writings of great critics, to think that Jesus, like his contemporaries, was looking for an actual reign of God on earth in the near future. He seems to have thought that great national convulsions were near at hand, that nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, that there were coming terrible catastrophes, out of which would emerge a new theocracy and a reign of the saints on earth. In the books of Daniel and Enoch, and other writings of the Hellenistic age, this succession of events was portrayed in grand and sublime imagery; and the anticipation of it had become a part of the mental furniture of every pious Israelite.

It was also generally believed that pious Israelites who had passed away would arise from the grave in their bodies to take a part in the future kingdom. Whether Jesus fully shared this belief, or how far he accepted it, it is impossible to be sure. What is clear is that his teaching as to the future life does not in any way depend upon it. Whether we think of the woman who had seven husbands as living again in a spiritual kingdom on earth, or in a realm above the skies, does not really affect the scope of the passage.

"They marry not, nor are given in marriage." It is a stern saying, and those who regard the future life as a continuation of the present, with

its domestic relations and friendships unchanged, must take account of it. It certainly does not agree with the view either of primitive religion or of modern popular sentiment.

The last sentence of the saying of Jesus has also profound meaning: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Those who have passed away in some sense yet live in and to God. The phrase is not explained. There is a saying like it in the book of *Wisdom*, "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God." What the words mean cannot be easily set forth: yet Christians will feel that they have a deep significance.

IV

Philosophic Views

Certain analogies taken from the life of nature have been brought forward as indicating a personal immortality. Indeed, the perpetual hopefulness of nature, the way in which the grain springs from the seed (an analogy pressed by St Paul), the revival in every spring of the plants which had died down to their roots, are full of hopeful suggestion. Another equally striking analogy has been often put forth. Some of the ephemeral insects, such as dragon-flies, spend in their larval state as water-grubs months or years at the bottom of a pond. Then on a sunny day

they rise to the surface of the water, their skin splits, and there emerges a beautiful winged creature which has hardly any likeness to the larva. Does not this give us a hint that men also may rise at death into a new and undreamed of life? Yes, it gives us a hint, but no more. For the May-fly, for all its beauty, lives but a day or two, and spends that time only in propagation and the laying of eggs. It is a suggestion of the marvellous originality and variety in nature, but the analogy to human life is not close.

It is certain, though it is not always recognised, that in our everyday life we have foretastes of death. Every time we give up our consciousness at the sweet approach of sleep, our life comes to an end, to be placed in the hands of God, and restored to us after an interval. And those who before an operation submit to take an anæsthetic, in a more deliberate manner give up life in the hope of eventually receiving it back in fuller measure. These are really acts of faith. We can never know when we go to sleep that we shall wake again; we can never know that our heart will not stop under the anæsthetic. Yet we go boldly forward, relying on our experience of the past, and our belief in the reign of law in the universe. It is a small venture of faith, while death, when—as is not usual—it is consciously expected, is a great venture of faith.

I may venture on another analogy. What seems a blank sheet of paper, which is really inscribed with invisible ink, may, on being heated, suddenly become an important and purposeful document. So it is not beyond imagination that the stress of death may develop into activity faculties which before were latent. But, of course, this is only a suggestion, not an argument.

The argument for the future life which philosophers have most frequently cited and on which they have specially relied, is the incomplete nature of the world of experience, when regarded from the ethical point of view. It is true that there is in the world a *tendency* towards the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice; but this tendency is constantly frustrated by the wickedness of men or by what seems the accident of events. In few lives can we see the correspondence between goodness and happiness at all perfect or complete. On the contrary, the good seem constantly to be the sufferers, and the hard and consistent self-seekers to be at least outwardly successful and prosperous. The problem is as old as the Book of Job and the beginnings of Greek philosophy. It has been the tendency of all enthusiastic religion to assert that the imperfect justice visible in the world will be corrected in a future life, in which the correspondence between goodness and happiness will be established by a divine judge. The happiness

and the misery in this future state will depend directly upon the goodness or the badness of the life in the world.

The imagery of the day of judgment has varied from school to school of religion, and from time to time. The most sublime vision of it, that in the 25th chapter of Matthew, the vision of the throne of glory, and of the separation of the sheep from the goats, is on the face of it a parable, as is indeed quite obvious from the substitution of sheep and goats for human beings. Some of that imagery tends to fade as times go on; and the vivid and cataclysmic form of the judgment may be seen to be something of an illusion. But that there is a judgment of souls, that there are before every soul future rewards and punishments, has been the persistent belief of the Church, and not of Christians only, but of all who take life seriously.

This argument may be put in another and less crude form. The life in the flesh may well be regarded as a moral training whereby the soul, if it sets itself on the side of right, is educated into nobleness and beauty. And this moral nobleness and beauty are the highest and most worthy productions which come into our experience. If this progress towards what is better ceases suddenly at death, what a waste of splendid powers, what a want of continuity in the scheme of existence! Everywhere in the world we see

continuity, evolution; things do not cease to be, but go on existing under changed conditions. But in this case there would be a hopeless cataclysm, for of course the fact that the elements of the body continue in new combinations would not at all constitute continuity in the higher life. Nor would the mere survival of a personality in the influence which it exercises on children or friends, or by writings, be a survival of the soul in any personal sense.

Arguments such as these have been current in all the great schools of moral philosophy since the time of Plato. And they are still brought forward by some of the best of our philosophers. If they are less prominent and perhaps less accounted of in our days, the reason lies rather in the hurry and rush of our time, which often excludes serious thought of any kind, and in the materialism which naturally results from the physical conveniences of the age, than in any diminution of value in the arguments themselves. But it is possible, from the activist or pragmatist point of view, which is accepted in the present work, to bring to them a considerable reinforcement. In that view it is maintained that speculative thought can never reach results of permanent and objective validity, that thought is not the real basis of belief. Belief comes from within, from the motions of the unconscious and the results of action. Such

motions give birth to thought on the one side and to emotion on the other; and the will rather than the intelligence decides to follow them or to reject them. It is from an inner impulse that men believe in a life beyond the grave. The scenery of that life is coloured by the intellectual conditions of the time; and mythologists in a more primitive age, and philosophers in a more self-conscious age, try to mould schemes, mythologic, poetic, or intellectual, which will accord with the inward prompting.

Thus the really fundamental question in regard to the belief in a future life is whether the urging which gives rise to that belief is from above or from below, whether it is in accord with the law of our being and with the will of God, or whether it is a hindrance, tending to delay the acceptance of the divine ideas and to degrade the life of nations. Here the only test is that given by the Saviour, "By their fruits ye shall know them; If any man is ready to do the will of God, he shall know of the teaching whether it is of God."

Regarding in this light the history of the belief in immortality we cannot hesitate to find that, mixed as it has been in all ages with superstition and baseness, yet on the whole it has tended in unbounded measure to the raising of the level of life. In a belief in the continued existence of the ancestor lie the roots alike of religion and of social progress. We may see this especially in

the records of the ancient Egyptians, whose feeling of responsibility to the gods, whose conviction of a judgment to come in the world of shades, tended very greatly to moralise the people, to moderate the cruelty and rapacity of the rulers, and to furnish to the ruled a consolation amid their heavy toils. In Greece the Mysteries of Eleusis greatly tended to moralise the life at Athens, as we see from the testimony of poets and philosophers. And when what was best in all the religions of the ancient world was merged in Christianity, no feature of the Christian faith was clearer than the belief in a future life. At the first it was in a measure eclipsed by the Jewish hope of a terrestrial millennium; but this was but the scaffold which protected the rising temple of faith, and it soon fell away.

If there be in the scheme of the world such things as moral good and moral evil, clearly the belief in immortality must be on the side of the good. Thousands have been sustained amid struggles and sufferings undergone for the good of mankind by the hope of a better and heavenly life. Thousands have been scared from evil which strongly attracted them by the fear of future punishment. The reverse has not happened. We cannot imagine a man deliberately setting himself on the side of evil because he hoped for future reward, or avoiding the life of virtue for fear of being hereafter punished for pursuing it.

Of course, there may be mistakes and short-sightedness. Men may think that courses which prove in the end to lead to evil are in the line of the divine will, or that actions really tending to the betterment of life are against that will. But such cases are the exception and not the rule, unless men's life on the earth is dominated by the powers of evil.

Modern materialism, no doubt, would put in a plea on the other side. It would say that the hope of immortality, by transferring the centre of men's aspirations from the present to the future life, has done harm, and inclined men to put up with faulty social arrangements and physical discomfort in the world. It would declare that the belief in a future life has been used by the classes in possession of power and wealth to pacify as with an opiate the uneasy stirring of the toilers.

So stands the controversy in our days: Christianity and the Spirit on one side, on the other materialist socialism, culminating in the Bolshevism of the ruling clique in Russia. The controversy will never be decided by logic and reasoning, but will have to be fought out, not necessarily with arms, but by the impact of spirit against spirit and society against society. The weaknesses and crimes of the Christians in the past have so deeply weighted them that they will not win without a severe struggle; but that

they will in the end win seems to be proved, not only for those who believe in a righteous God and the dominance of spirit, but also for all who take to heart the lessons to be derived from the struggles of the past.

Considerations like those above cited, though they may confirm a man's belief in the survival of personality, are not the basis of that belief. It is at bottom based on a feeling of value, the profound conviction that though each of us is like a mote in the sunbeam compared with the world of spirit and the ruler of it, yet each of us has something to give which God is not unwilling to take, and something to keep which is of untold value. The personality, the soul, is not to be compared with material things, with riches or houses or even the physical beauty of the body; but is in character infinite. That infinite value should imply infinite duration is not to be proved logically, is perhaps illusive; but that does not prevent the rise of a certainty that there is in each of us that which is a treasure of great value, which will not accept death as an end, but has a profound disbelief in it.

Most thoughtful people have, at some time in their lives, usually in moments of crisis, had a consciousness of a certain duality. They have seen the course of their life flowing on, as one sees a river from a height; and have been aware of a supreme duty in regard to that course.

They have felt the law of their being as urging them to take this or that action, not as a question of expediency or inexpediency, or of better and worse, but as necessary to the preservation of their honour, to the saving of their souls. No other conviction could have given to martyrs the courage to face torture and death. For, looked at with the unimagining eyes of the superficial self, death must be the worst of all calamities. Yet, as Bacon well remarked, a man has in him many tendencies stronger in fact than the love of life. Love, pride, contempt, even desire of fame, will make a man meet easily and in confidence the prospect of wounds and of death; and even feel as if no other course were possible.

But the mass of mankind are not introspective; and few, probably, are consciously aware at moments of crisis of the motives which really sway them. To take a concrete case. In 1914, when there was a sudden and imperative demand for soldiers for the Great War, tens of thousands of volunteers came forward at once, abandoning all prospect of material good, leaving wife and child, and careers to which they had been strongly attached, ready to face any peril and a hundred forms of death. Many of them, when rejected as medically unfit, and so provided with an honourable excuse for retirement, could not rest, but tried again and again, by contrivance, sometimes even by fraud, to gain a place in the ranks

of fighters. A great many of these eager volunteers, if they had been questioned as to their motives, would have given a very inadequate reply. "I could not rest," "I was obliged to do my bit," "I could not hold back when others came forward." Such explanations as these, rather than any reasoned view of duty to country or eagerness for the triumph of justice in the world, would commonly be forthcoming. What they would really mean, would be that there was a sub-conscious urging which a man might not fully understand, but which he could not resist without losing all self-respect.

That there is something to save, and that its saving is of unmeasured importance, is thus the real belief, not only of the reflective, or of professed Christians, but of every one who takes life seriously.

But when we come to the more definite question, What is the exact nature of that in us which survives death, and what kind of life lies before it? we are at once involved in the greatest difficulties. We have already seen how much of unreason and illusion there is in the minds of most men. And I am not aware that the best intelligences have in this matter succeeded much better than those of the ordinary type. We soon reach the limits of valid human thought, and the void beyond it will not support the feet of reasoning or the wings of imagination.

It seems to me that a really religious view of the future life is that of those who think of it as not our business, but in the hands of a wise and kind Father, whose help and inspiration in the past leads us to be confident that he will at death give us what is best for us. Whatever the future may be, it will not be beyond divine control and disposing.

When we turn to the early records of Christianity, we find in St Luke two notable records of the acceptance of death. The last words of Jesus were, according to this authority, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Almost the last words of Stephen were: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." That, surely, is the typical attitude of the Christian in the presence of death. Any definite or confident attitude in such presence must be based, for those who do not accept an infallible Church, on the Christian experience of life.

V

Eternal Life

It must be remembered that thus far I have been speaking only of personal immortality, the survival of death by the individual. But in some parts of the New Testament, and especially in the Fourth or Spiritual Gospel, a way is shown for the attainment of an immortality of a less personal kind. We may call it the way of

Christian mysticism. Mysticism is a characteristic of the higher faith in all religions, and was widely accepted, rather by the few than the many, at the time of the rise of Christianity. And as Christianity baptized into Christ, and raised to a nobler level, all that was best in the current religion of the age, it naturally also transformed the existing mysticism, which at the time had many forms, some higher and some lower.

In the Fourth Gospel the writer, in his usual method, places in contrast the ordinary materialistic view of the people, which here as elsewhere he calls the view of "the Jews," and his Master's higher teaching.[1] "If a man keep my word, he shall never see death," says Jesus. The Jews, as in the parallel cases, take the words in the popular sense: "Abraham is dead," they reply, "and the prophets." How then, they imply, can your followers escape the common fate? Jesus does not in this context explain the nature of the death and the life which he means, but in other passages he does so abundantly. They have no relation to the world of sense and of time, but only to the world of spirit.

Eternal life, as spoken of in the Bible, and especially in the Fourth Gospel, is very different from mere continued personal existence. It implies the rising above the temporary, the

[1] John viii. 51.

subordination of the personality to a higher and purer life. Naturally it is a process very hard to describe, since all our language must be taken from the world of sense and of mundane activities. But it is suggested in a hundred ways by the fine spirits who have already in the present life brought themselves into accord with the life of the spirit which is eternal, that is, which escapes the limits of space and time and reaches below the very roots of personality.

Some men, even in their lifetime, seem to have attained to the almost complete merging of self in the higher life. Thus St Paul says that the believer is dead, and his life hidden with Christ in God: that he himself no longer lives, but Christ lives in him. Such language is echoed by a long line of Christian mystics. In another place St Paul says, "If ye live unto the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live." It is evident that the life of which the Apostle speaks is very different from the continued existence of the individual. He states a great law of the higher life, that the personality which is dominated by the desires of the body, naturally dies with the body; but the personality which lives in the spirit need not fear the death of the body, but partakes of the deathlessness of the spirit.

The Fourth Evangelist writes: "This is eternal life, that they may know thee the only true God,

and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." This seems as true as any mere verbal statement can be in regard to so vast and undefinable a thing as eternal life. But, of course, the word *know* is not used primarily in any mere intellectual sense. To know intellectually or scientifically is a great matter, but to build life upon the knowledge is the one really important thing. To know God is to realise the nature of spirit, and to feel our duty to promote the will and purpose of God in creation. To know Jesus Christ is to become part of the earthly body of Christ, and to promote his kingdom on earth. To realise the communion of saints is to feel that we work not alone but as part of a great realm of spirits, incarnate and otherwise, with whom we are in some kind of communion, who help us in the spiritual way, and are with us reaching forward towards the life which is eternal.

It is evident that, writing on so great a theme as Eternal Life, which has been spoken of by the greatest Christians in all ages, all that I can venture to do is to define the relation of the belief to those activist principles which lie at the foundation of this little work. I must not attempt description, but confine myself to the psychological point of view.

The Creed says: "I look for—or hope for—the life of the world to come." But whereas the continuance of personality after death can never

be more than a hope, eternal life in the spirit may be a matter of experience and certainty. In fact, it has been such to a multitude of men in the past. In so far as in thought and in action we aim at some end which we desire, we may succeed or we may fail, but in any case we attain only a gratification which belongs to the personality, and which is liable to all the disillusions and disappointments which belong to the personal life. But in so far as we merge our personal wishes and hopes in the divine will, caring only for the coming of the Kingdom, for the spread of truth and goodness and beauty in the world, and beyond the world in the realm of spirit, in so far we are not liable to disillusion. It is true that our particular plans may fail, and our particular purposes may be frustrated, but alike the general history of the world and our own experience of life, show that in the long run there is a general drift towards the better. If we believe in God at all, we must believe that the will of God will in the long run make its way. And by uniting our own wills with that of God, we make our final happiness certain. Our little schemes and systems break down; but we are quite ready to believe that this failure is due to their faults and imperfections; and that if there is any good in them, their working will be carried on by others. We are like the runners in a torch-race, as Lucretius put it, who pass on the torch from one

to another in the certainty that the last runner will reach the goal. Thus eternal life in the spirit is a necessary corollary, if we believe, in the first place, in law in the moral world, and in the second place, in the final triumph of good.

The gradual approach to the divine is a process which we may all in some measure realise. In a few exceptional natures it may go on until the individuality is obscured and all but merged in the life which is spiritual and eternal. This is the great teaching of the higher mysticism, which belongs to all religion. Such merging was sought by Greek philosophers by the way of thought and contemplation. It is sought by the Buddhists through asceticism and the conquest of personal feeling of pleasure or pain. It may be sought in modern days by the votaries of science who recognise what Bergson calls *l'évolution créatrice*, who have an intense inner sympathy with the power which lies behind evolution, and has been all through history gradually moulding the visible into the likeness of the divine ideas or forms which have always existed in the divine thought ; and which in spite of all retrogression and opposition are gradually taking form in the world.

All these ways of approach to the eternal life are open to Christians. But the Christian has also open to him a more excellent way. The incarnation of God in Christ, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the followers of Christ in the

early age of Christianity, the formation in the Christian Church of a body of believers who through the ages carry on the life of Christ in the world, — all these make possible, and in some degree actual, a higher form of mysticism. Christian mysticism has never yet, save in the person of the Founder, reached any final or perfect development; but in the past many Christians have approached the highest type.

In spite of the weaknesses of individual Christians, Christian mysticism is a special type. The point on which it stands contrasted with the mysticism of the Buddhist, is that it does not make war on and try to destroy the human will. In Christ there was a human as well as a divine will, as is most evidently shown in the last prayer, "Not my will, but thine, be done." The human will has to subordinate itself to the divine, it has to stand resolutely on the side of the divine will against the world, but it does not cease to exist.

Some recent writers have greatly perplexed themselves, and even given way to despair, because they think it demonstrated by science that within measurable time the heat of our globe will fail and life will come to an end on it. Such overstrained anxieties seem to me out of place. We cannot so fully grasp the future as to be sure that the predictions of the astronomers are to be trusted. Einstein seems to

have shown that they have yet much to learn. And even if they have rightly foreseen the inevitable end of the world, there lies above and beyond it the world of spirit, and processes begun on this earth may be carried on elsewhere. The experience of life in this world may make it possible for the Creative Spirit to develop life and goodness more easily and rapidly on some other planet. Our globe floats in an ocean of spirit; at present a fascinating drama of history is being worked out on it. But other acts of the drama may take place in other worlds. A generation which communicates by wireless telegraph with distant countries need not despair of communicating thought to other worlds. And the ways of spirit are much more subtle than those of electricity. To the spirit the vast spaces which separate world from world do not exist. It seems to me perfectly possible that the great crises of history, the sudden turning of the general consciousness of men on earth in new directions, may be connected with spiritual storms in other worlds. This is, of course, all matter of possibility and conjecture, but no one can reasonably declare it impossible.

CHAPTER XI

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Collective Consciousness of the Church

In this section we have to deal with the Church as the Community of saints. It is in regard to the nature and the value of the Christian Community that we find the widest difference between individual Christians and between different branches of the Church, differences so profound that they constitute a great barrier to any scheme for the reuniting of Christendom. In England and America a multitude of Christians, good and highly religious men, approach the Faith from a merely personal standpoint, attaining to a personal relationship to God in Christ, but looking on Churches, and indeed on all the outward phenomena of religion, as merely destined to help individuals towards a higher and more continuous realisation of God. At the other extreme the Roman Church subordinates completely the individual to the society; it is for the organised society to dictate creeds and principles of conduct, and for the members of the Church merely to obey. So we have continual

cross-currents, many members of the Roman Church constantly rebelling against ordinances which offend the conscience and lapsing from loyalty, and many Protestants falling into despair of individual religion and seeking a haven of rest in a Church which has no doubt of its own infallibility, and is willing, on condition of obedience, to undertake the whole responsibility of the saving of the souls of its votaries.

It seems to me that modern psychology, with its insistence on the existence in every organised society of a group-mind, which is more than the sum of the minds of individuals of the group, has thrown fresh light on this whole question.[1] It has furnished an observational or scientific basis for the doctrine of a Church. It clearly distinguishes between a crowd and an organised society. In the former there is an intensification of emotion, a sensibility which may be influenced to great effect by a skilled orator ; but there can scarcely be said to be a common intelligence or a common conscience. Rather, great waves of feeling and passion sweep away alike the minds and the consciences of individuals, so that the crowd becomes a terrible, but a blind, almost an insane, force. On the other hand, in organised groups and societies there is what may be regarded as a corporate consciousness, in some ways like

[1] See especially W. M'Dougall, *Elements of Social Psychology* and *The Group Mind.*

the consciousness of an individual, but wider and more enduring, having distinct traits in morals, manners, and intelligence.

It is thus with nations. Mere blood and descent do not make a nation, though of course inherited tendencies go for much. The English people is in many ways very homogeneous, though in race it is very mixed, consisting of elements Celtic, Saxon, Danish, Flemish, Jewish, and what not? with a strong substratum of primitive and pre-Celtic inhabitants. The Scottish nation is now fairly homogeneous, though it consists of two sections, the Gaelic or Highland and the Saxon or Lowland. The Welsh people is homogeneous, though the mass of it is racially pre-Celtic, consisting of very primitive elements. The French nation is homogeneous, though it consists of Gaul and Frank, Breton and Gascon. And political history does not by itself make a nation. Though England and south Ireland have been long politically united, they do not together make a nation; nor do south and north Ireland make a nation, though they are enclosed in one small island. Austria has never been a nation, though its political history has been important and consistent.

The course of political history, and above all identity of institutions, a common language and literature, common religious beliefs, gradually mould a congeries of tribes into a nation, which

speaks through its great men, its poets, and orators and men of action, and which acquires what is often called, in what is scarcely a metaphor, a soul. And this soul dominates the conscious and still more the unconscious life of all the individuals of the nation, so that clear-sighted statesmen can often judge what course the popular feeling of a nation will take under definite conditions.

Within the nation, which is held together by a definite political constitution, and which has visible limitations of territory, we have in modern days a number of societies, consisting of voluntary associates, and held together not so much by organisation as by ideas. No one can enumerate them, for they are innumerable, and spring up like mushrooms on every side. There are learned academies belonging to nations and universities, whose basis is the love of learning and research. Then all the different branches of science and learning are represented by voluntary societies, the members of which are united in a common admiration and pursuit, the Classical Association, the Entomological Society, the Psychical Society, and a host of others. Or they are organised with a view to practical results, as the College of Surgeons, the Royal Academy of Art, the Institute of Architects, and the like. All of these useful institutions may be said in a sense to have a soul, to represent a side of human thought or

practice; and many of them have devoted officials, who may be said almost to sink their own personalities in that of the society to which they belong.

I need speak of but one class of these societies, the class devoted to religion. In the ancient world religion belonged to the state. We may say almost indifferently that the gods belonged to the state, or that the state belonged to the gods. In each organised community there were traditional rites and observances with which the well-being of the state was supposed to be bound up, and which could not with impunity be neglected. Patriotism and the service of the national deities were bound so closely together as to be inseparable; the king or the magistrate was the priest; and his personal character and private opinions were of no importance, so long as he carried through the religious ceremonials of the state with scrupulous exactness. The Roman Emperor was *ex officio* Pontifex Maximus of the Roman state, though he was often a complete sceptic in religious matters. Sometimes, however, the order was reversed, as in some states in Asia Minor, where, instead of the king being priest, the priest was king; his sacred character overshadowing and absorbing his civic and military functions. A very remarkable and exceptional form of religious rule or theocracy was that which prevailed in Israel before the nation

copied its neighbours in instituting kingship. Here the prophet was judge of the nation. By the direct inspiration of Jehovah, as every one believed, one prophet after another, sometimes even prophets of the female sex, arose, and, if they succeeded in repelling the foes of Israel, seem to have exercised considerable power for a time. In the lives of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, we see a picture of the clashing between the old prophetic dominance and the new military kingship, which seems to have been forced on the nation by external attacks.

Then, in the gradual decay of the religion of the state, most prominently in Greece, we trace the rise of voluntary religious societies. Their outstanding feature was their independence of the state. Men did not belong to them by birth, but from choice. Their ultimate ruler was some spiritual being or deified ancestor, for no clear line was drawn between these. Under him the society was ruled by a class of priests, who professed to declare his will, which was revealed either in sacred books treasured by the priests, or by continued inspiration mostly imparted to the latter when they were in a condition of trance or of sacred ecstasy. The society no doubt externalised its inspiration, regarded it as coming from a spiritual patron, Mithras, or Sabazius, or Isis; and of these the priests sometimes had visions. There was an almost unlimited possi-

bility of intellectual error in these externalisations. Mithras was the sublimated sun, Isis an ancient Egyptian goddess, Sabazius a Phrygian deity of the lower world. And even the priests called their divine patrons by many names, and had very vague notions as to their real being.

Those who wish to gain some insight into the character of the mystic religions of later Greece should read the latter part of the *Golden Ass* or *Matamorphoses* of Apuleius, a writer of the Antonine age. In the eleventh book he gives a most vivid and instructive picture of the cult of the great goddess of nature, whom he regards as embodied in the moon, and best worshipped under the name of Isis. The character of her priests, the mystic devotion of her votaries, the prayers by which she was approached, the ceremonies in which she was revealed, the crowning vision in which, in a supremely beautiful form, she sometimes showed herself to favoured followers, are there set forth in a way which, once realised, can scarcely be forgotten.

In the light of modern social psychology these cults change their aspect. No doubt each of them represented some power or energy of the spiritual world working in the sub-consciousness of their representatives on earth, and in the society dominated by those representatives. The Jews, with their extreme and intolerant monotheism, would say that they were nothing at all,

mere delusions. But that was not the usual view of the early Christians, who were convinced that they were demons, evil spiritual powers who swayed their votaries, and led them to perdition. To them the heathen gods were not, as they were to the strict Jews, dumb and useless idols, but spiritual powers who resisted the light and inspiration of Christianity, and urged their disciples into the conflict with the spirit which worked in the Church. I think that modern science and investigation would agree rather with the Christian than with the Jewish view. These powers were something above and beyond the personalities of the pagans, real powers working in their sub-consciousness.

St Paul, with an inconsistency by no means unusual in him, takes up sometimes the one view, sometimes the other. The pagan deities, he sometimes says, are nothing at all, dumb and inanimate idols. But in other places he says that those who sacrificed to them sacrificed to devils, and not to God. Generally speaking, in the whole early age of Christianity diabolic inspiration was as fully believed in as divine inspiration. As the inspiration of Moses had grappled with and overthrown the enchantments of the magicians of Egypt, so the Christian inspiration was ready to attack and destroy the spiritual forces of paganism. That way of regarding things has fallen out of modern Christianity,

which has mostly reverted to the cruder Jewish view. But the experience of life has, I think, tended to bring us back to it. If there be a spiritual inspiration which leads men to good, there are also parallel inspirations which lead men to evil. In Reformation times, the conflict between Christianity and magic repeated the early conflict between Christianity and the pagan societies.

We know so little about Mithraism and the other mystic faiths which competed with early Christianity, that we are scarcely able to estimate their moral qualities. The true Christian way is to judge them by their fruits; and we do not know with any exactness what those fruits were. But it is scarcely possible to doubt that as a whole they were on an immeasurably lower level than Christianity: and that the contest between Christianity and them was one between light and darkness. To pagan observers of the time, Christianity seemed to be one of the many mystic cults; and so it was in many external points. But it only resembled the rest as a beautiful flower resembles a worthless weed, which may belong to the same botanical genus. I am speaking, of course, of the Christianity of the post-apostolic age; the Christianity of the origins was regarded as a mere heretical Jewish sect, as we learn from many passages in *Acts*: but when it took root outside Judea, in such Hellenistic cities as Ephesus, or Antioch, or

Alexandria, it soon changed its external form, and adapted itself to the Hellenistic world.

Christianity in the early Roman Empire was in some ways parallel to the religions of Isis and Sabazius. It had a class of priests who represented in it the influence of the Founder. It had sacred books or oracles, both in the Jewish Scriptures and in the writings of the New Testament. It had sacred rites of initiation and communion, which were kept as far as possible from heathen observation. But above all, it stood in an intimate relation to an unseen spiritual power, which worked in the community of believers by inspiration, and sometimes by vision or miracle, or ecstatic utterance.

It is this continuous inspiration, continuous through all countries, and through all ages, which is the life and soul of the Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints. In the New Testament it is sometimes spoken of as the Spirit of Christ, or the Eternal Christ; and sometimes as the Holy Spirit of God. When Schleiermacher spoke of it as the *Gemeingeist* or common spirit of the Church, he was partly right and partly wrong. He was right in so far as the inspiration belongs primarily to the Church as a whole, and only secondarily to individual members of it. But perhaps he too completely regarded it as the mere resultant of the tendencies of Christians. It was more than that; something added to it

by an inspiration from the world of spirit, a great spiritual power which lived in the Church, as a spirit lives in a human body in constant connection with the infinite ocean of spirit.

Christian thought has to consider and define the relations which the spirit in the Church bears to the historic Jesus, to the infinite Divine Father, and to the Divine Spirit which works through history on human society. This has in effect been the subject of previous chapters. What also is necessary is to consider how this divine influence works in the history of the Church, in the three realms of knowledge, of emotion, and of will; how it becomes embodied in creeds, in ritual, and ceremony, and in outward organisation. Those who think that the external in life works on and moulds the internal, will begin with organisation, regarding that as the essential in Christianity, and will set it down as the business of the officers of a Church whose organisation is the direct result of divine command to determine both the beliefs and the ritual of the Church. This tends to materialism. I think that, on the contrary, the working is from the internal outwards, that doctrine, ceremony, and even organisation are the fruit of inner impulse, the result of the activity of divine ideas, working first in the unconscious strata of man's being, then in his conscious life, then in the world of matter and experience.

It is in this way that I have treated the history of the Church in my *Exploratio Evangelica*. But since, even in a large work, I could only speak of these vast subjects in mere outline, it is clear that it would be a hopeless task to try to investigate them here in a much smaller book. It is to the *Exploratio* that I must direct those who are interested in seeing whither the course of religious thought which I have here followed works out in Christian history. In a more popular work, *The Growth of Christianity*, I have treated the same subject more slightly, with stronger light and shade.

Since, however, I cannot expect the reader to break off at this point, and to turn to my previous books, and as most readers will not have read, or at all events will not remember the course taken in them, I will add here a brief summary of the argument of the earlier chapters of it — the *Exploratio* — chapters in which I find nothing of importance to alter. This summary is taken from Chapter XL of the work in question. In Chapters II, III, and IV the psychology of religious belief is briefly set forth. The basis of religion is experience, in particular the experience of sin and its removal, and of the answer to prayer. On such experiences must be based, in the first place, an intense conviction of a Power within which works for righteousness; and in the second place, all assertions as to the divine attributes. By the same mental process which

discloses to us other selves in the world, we reach the assertion of an objective Deity who is good, who answers prayer, and whose being includes personality.

Chapters V and VI dwell on the truth that religious doctrine, being thus reached through experience and not by reasoning, must not be used as a basis for speculative construction. The truths of religion are not speculatively valid: their validity is universally subjective and practically objective. Religious metaphysics leads to insoluble contradictions; yet intellectual illusion may, like other forms of illusion, lead to happiness in life. But the only religion which can be secured against scepticism is relative religion, religion as revealed to man, and as adapted to a human environment.

Chapters VII and VIII trace in the field of history the working of the same phenomena which previous chapters had considered in relation to individual experience. History, like conduct, reveals a Power working for righteousness. The activities of this Power we choose to designate by the phrase "divine ideas"; but it must be understood that the word "idea" here signifies a working impulse, not a mental concept.[1] The

[1] The likeness of this view to those of Newman in his *Grammar of Assent*, and even to those of Bergson, is obvious. But I must be allowed to point out that it was written before the publication of Bergson's system.

divine ideas work first on the will then on the intellect and æsthetic faculties, leading to desire, to doctrine, to art, and to organisation. The determination of the working ideas as good, temporary, and bad, is a matter of the utmost difficulty; we can only venture to say that ideas which lead to the destruction of society are bad, those which tend to the preservation of society must contain good elements.

Chapters IX and X contain the germs of those that follow. We try to trace the ways in which the ideas are intellectually embodied in the world. In primitive times they are commonly embodied in myth, being usually ætiological in character. Ethical impulses give rise to myth in accordance with national character, and the fittest myths survive. The myth is purely indefinite, without relation to time; as the age of myths passes away, three outgrowths take its place, related to time—past, present, and future. In relation to the past, the ideas are embodied in ethical history, into which myth passes by imperceptible gradations. In relation to the future, the ideas are embodied in prophecy, which is of quite a different character from modern scientific prediction. In relation to the present, the myths are embodied in parable; and then in doctrine, which is a statement of relative truth in regard to the supersensual world.

With Chapter XI we pass from general principles to the origins of Christianity, and apply to them the philosophic and historic views already set forth.

This seems to me a true summary of the history of the Church.

More recently two able theologians, Dr A. J. Carlyle and Dr Vernon Bartlet, have gone over much the same ground with far more learning and in greater detail in their *Christianity in History*. But in fact this way of treating the history of the Church has in recent times become more and more usual, and is the method of a large proportion of our theologians. All that I have tried to do is to give articulate expression to a tendency of the modern intelligence.

It is obvious that, in speaking of the Church, I am not meaning to confine the term to any particular branch of it. *Ubi Christus ibi Ecclesia.* The Articles define the Church as " a congregation of faithful men in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered." The various Churches of Christendom, Eastern, Roman, and Reformed, each embody some side of the Christian inspiration, and, alas ! all mix that inspiration with much that is unworthy and impure. In my opinion any outward and visible union between them is almost impossible ; and it may even be doubted whether it is desirable, for varieties of organisa-

tion and ritual suit various countries and temperaments. An outwardly united Church, as we see from the history of the Middle Ages, is in great danger of degeneration ; the various organisations in it keep the blood flowing. Intercourse and combination for Christian purposes between branches of the Church is much to be desired : the rule of the whole by any curia or committee is hardly to be wished for. The unity of what is Christlike in all the visible Churches in one invisible Church is far more in accord with the spirit of the Founder.

The Communion of Saints

An aspect of the Catholic Church which calls for special notice here is that in which it includes not only the living members of the Church, but also the members who have passed away. "The saints on earth and all the dead but one communion make."

To many the phrase of the Creed, "I believe in the communion of saints," has a special and an important meaning. They think of the saints not as all the departed, but as those who have attained to a high rank in the divine kingdom. And they like to think of such as always near to help and to encourage, to lead in the direction of heaven, and to frustrate the powers of evil, which are always ready to take advantage of unguarded moments. They feel that God is

high and not always easy of approach, and think that even Christ has more sympathy with the exalted moods of the spirit than with the conduct and the needs of every day. They have a longing for more intimate and less exalted spiritual guides. This need has been in times past met by the belief which has been general in the Church either in special guardian angels, or in saints who have been canonised by the Church, and who have served as intermediaries between men and God.

Many theologians, especially in England, would regard the subject as one which did not need treatment. They would regard the desire as a perversion of pure Christianity; and the means for meeting it as merely superstitious. The abuses which sprang up in mediæval Europe in connection with the veneration of saints were so patent, that the great Reformers struck at the custom some of their hardest blows, and destroyed it root and branch in many places. Yet it had embodied for ages a real phase of the personal religion of the people, and tended not only to the virtue, but even more fully to the happiness of many. And we find in the lives of many who do not belong to Catholicism, Renan for example, a conviction of the constant presence and aid of departed members of their family. In a work like the present it will not answer to throw aside the features of Christianity

which have led to abuse. Our business is rather to consider what human needs lay at the root of that particular phase of Christian experience, and whether those needs may be satisfactorily met.

When we consider the veneration of saints in the mediæval and in the modern Roman Church from the purely historic and rationalist side, we are repelled. We observe that many of the saints of the Calendar, and even of the saints to whom worship has been especially addressed, either never lived at all, or at all events are not shown by history to have exhibited in their lives such high virtue and spiritual attainments as to merit an exalted position in the realm of spirits. Examples can easily be cited. Saint George, the patron saint of England, is of uncertain origin, and cannot be called a historic character. Saint Denys, the patron saint of France, is in much the same position, as indeed are many of the saints in most repute in mediæval Europe.

In the veneration of saints as accepted in the mediæval Church, and as continued in the Church of Rome, there are two special difficulties.

The first arises from the fact that the test of sainthood was the performance of miracles, either by the saint in his lifetime or by his remains when dead. This is a purely external test; and one of a singularly unfortunate kind. The miracles, or at all events those for which there is the best evidence, were mostly miracles of

healing. And we now know enough of faith-healing and the working of suggestion to know that such phenomena, though real, are of a subjective character, and cannot be used as objective proofs of the sainthood, the virtue or even the existence of the person to whose agency they are attributed. In ancient and mediæval times, as we know, evil spirits were credited with powers to work miracles, though lesser powers than those of the great Christians. And in modern days, faith-healing has been, and is, constantly exercised by people who have no claim to saintliness, and are even of very doubtful character. They do not usually pretend that it is their goodness, or their close relation to the world of spirit, which enables them to work these remarkable cures: sometimes they have no theory as to the source of their power, they only know by experience that it exists. And when we come to the miracles wrought not by a living influence, but by the dead bodies of saints, we fall to a still lower level. A multitude of instances might be cited in which the body or relic which wrought the miracle was not that of a saint at all, but a corpse found in the catacombs of Rome, and quite unidentified. There is no history more full of imposture and of greed than the history of the trade in relics, about which many papers, both instructive and amusing, have been written. Alleged miracles, or even

miracles supported by what looks like respectable testimony, have little evidential influence on the modern mind. Such works as Dr E. Abbott's elaborate examination of the miracles attributed to St. Thomas at Canterbury, are irresistible in their proof that miracles of faith-healing were not outside the order of nature, and that there is no adequate testimony for miracles of a less ambiguous kind.

The second point on which the mediæval saint-worship is unsatisfactory is the kind of excellence which belonged to those who were canonised. The tales told of them in the great Bollandist collection, not only in the majority of cases rest on little historic evidence, but they do not to a modern mind exhibit the highest virtues. To be willing to be martyred for one's belief is doubtless a proof of sincerity ; but it does not prove either moral greatness or intellectual eminence, or even orthodoxy. Very often the martyrdom was by no means voluntary. And virginity, which is one of the commonest titles to merit in female saints, is not in itself a virtue, though of course under certain circumstances its acceptance in preference to the married life might have been the result of spiritual fervour. Any modern writer on ethics, whether Christian or agnostic, whether Catholic or Protestant, would draw up a very different list of historic saints from that which has the authority of the Church.

Auguste Comte, in his *Positivist Calendar*, drew up a list of saints, after whom he proposed to name the days and the months of the year. And whatever objections may be raised to some of his nominations, his list is incomparably superior to that of the Roman Church. It includes nearly all the great personalities of the world's history, rulers and poets, religious leaders and discoverers, men of science and social reformers. The great difference between the two lists, however, is that one has behind it the authority of the Western Church, while the other is a mere intellectual construction, in which every one feels at liberty to make alterations and amendments.

But when we turn from spurious history and miracles of suggestion to the psychology of saint-worship, we enter a very different field. "They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed," may be said of multitudes who have drawn from the supposed help and mediation of saints a fund of energy and of happiness. The votary would, of course, not be content with this statement; but would say that he derived not only help and inward strength, but also success in undertakings, and the miraculous removal of difficulties. But here we enter a region where verification is difficult, and both affirmation and negation are so swayed by subjective elements that final decision is not

possible. The world of spirit is a vast and little explored region; and some phases or aspects of it are more accessible to some men, and other phases or aspects to other men. A saint, whether he ever lived in the world or not, may by the recognition of a church or a monastic society, become a reservoir of spiritual influence, accessible to faith. In the same way many even sceptical people, whose nearest and dearest have passed into the world of spirit, have been aware of a new and protective influence, touching their lives at many points, sometimes acting in the sub-conscious region, sometimes even rising into consciousness. It would be rash to say that such experiences are baseless. But it is very safe to say that they must be received with caution, and not allowed to override the working of a man's best intelligence and will. Nor can they be used in an objective way to prove the present exaltation of the supposed source of inspiration.

The votaries of the saints will appeal to spiritual experience with the same confidence as will the earnest worshippers of Christ. They will speak of instance after instance in which an appeal to a spiritual patron has been answered. Often, indeed, the appeal has been for some worldly help or advantage; and the claim is that it has been granted. But often a higher tone is used. Those who have adopted the monastic life, in particular, have often felt within them a

power not of this world, which they have attributed to the working of some inspiring Power from without them, and have associated with some historic saint or martyr, who seems to have found in them a new life upon earth.

It is possible to brush all this inward life aside as the fruit of mere superstition and delusion. But such cavalier procedure is not justified, since undoubtedly facts of experience are at the basis of it. And so long as the votary keeps his assertions within the bounds of his experience, it is not easy, nor is it usually desirable, to argue him out of his beliefs. But when we turn from mere subjective experience to life in the world, and the facts of conduct, it is evident that a searching criticism is necessary to give inner experience its due and proper place in the scheme of the universe. Two tests have to be applied. First there is the test of history, and second there is the test of results, of fruits.

I have already considered the historic test. The moment it is applied we see a vast difference between faith in Christ on the one hand, and faith in subordinate Christian personalities on the other. We have seen that on broad historic grounds faith in the risen and exalted Christ can be fully defended. It lay at the very roots of the rising Church, and has never in the history of the Christian faith wholly died away. As to the saints, few, indeed, of those who have been

dearest to societies and coteries have been among the great figures of historic Christianity. St Paul indignantly reproves those who would exalt Peter, or Apollos, or himself into the heads or oracles of societies. The patron saints of the coteries have usually been persons of whose history little is known, and that little is often not greatly in their favour. Thus there is a deep and impassable abyss between the historic grounds of the faith in Christ and the historic grounds of all other forms of personal worship in Christianity.

The second test, that of practical fruits, the ethical test, is the one which is set forth fully, and enforced by a multitude of appeals, in the Gospels themselves. Surely there is no need to cite passages. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." "He that heareth my words, and doeth them not, I will liken him to a foolish man, who built his house on the sand." And not only is this the authorised test for Christians, but it is the test which the common-sense of mankind in all ages has insisted in applying. Men try the spirits to see whether they lead to good or to evil, and thereby judge of the reality of the inspiration.

There is no need to attack, or even to criticise,

the consciousness which many eminent and devout persons have had of spiritual aid received from some saint of Christian history, or it may be from some friend or relative of their own who has passed from the visible world. If it lead to a better life it is justified by fruits; very seldom is it a source of corruption. What we may fairly insist upon is that however valuable such an influence may be to the individual, that individual has no right to impose upon others the belief in the inferences which he may draw from the experience as to the supermundane being of his saint.

If we set aside the merely historic claim of the saints, and look at their communion in a broader light, we shall see that it may in a sense be justified. In the chapter which deals with the Eternal Christ, I have tried to show that the mystic form of the worship of Christ does not dwell so much on the records of his life in the world, on what St Paul calls "Christ after the flesh," as on the divine element which lay beneath that life and which is eternal. In the same way the mystic view of the communion of saints does not dwell so much on the events of their lives, as to which we are seldom well informed, as on the fact that so far as they were saints they exhibited in the world a phase of the divine; they continued the obedience of Christ, and filled up, as St Paul says, the measure of his

sufferings. The Power which sustained and inspired them was an eternal power which is still working in the world, and working more effectually because of the obedience with which they accepted it, and the energy with which they furthered its working. In this view Christ and the saints make up an unity, an unity into which every Christian may hope to be received, so that he in turn may help forward the baptism of the world into Christ. And so long as it is the divine power working in saints, which is the real object of worship, that worship is at least innocent.

From this point of view we see a test to be applied to the communion of men with the world of spirits. If that communion is only with the phenomenal life of the deceased in the visible world, it is only according to the flesh, and is subject not only to human fallibility, but also to confusions of all kinds, and even deceptions by unworthy spiritual agencies. But if it is with the divine element in the deceased, it is in effect with God, God as revealed in the spirits of men. "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God"; and every spiritual effort and achievement makes more accessible the stream of divine influence which beats upon, works through, and spiritualises the existing frame of the universe, especially of the universe of human beings.

But the Church as the earthly body of Christ,

as continuing on earth the obedience of Christ, and as inheriting his relation to God, is a part of the spiritual world which has a definite and special character. To define the limits of the Church on earth is impossible, since it is not a mere organisation, but a spiritual communion, which marks its nature. But this indefiniteness does not prevent the Church from being in a sense an unity. Of this unity the Fourth Gospel is the great charter.

The ideal Christ of the Fourth Evangelist often insists on the theme that what is true of himself is true of his disciples also. He is the vine, they are the branches. As he is one with God, so are they one with him. The works that he does, they shall do also: nay, more, they shall do even greater works, because his death will bring God nearer to man, and increase the store of divine influence working in the world. Thus the effects which the divine obedience and suffering of Christ work in the spiritual world, will be supplemented and reinforced by every act of obedience and every patient suffering endured by the followers of Christ. Thus is God ever drawn nearer to men, and the higher life of the Church stands in intimate relations with the whole spiritual powers of the universe.

Christians, however, use the word *Communion* in a special, almost a technical, sense. By it they mean the great central rite of Christianity,

in which in a mystic sense they eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Founder. And they think, or one may say they know by experience, that by that sacred feast they enter into the Christian communion of saints. They enter consciously into a four-fold relationship. First, with all Christians in all lands and all Churches who partake of the same rite, with whom they enter into what may be called a blood-relationship, and whom they accept as brothers and sisters in the faith, putting away all sense of injury and offence, longing only for a closer and more intimate union. Second, with all Christians who in past ages, from the earliest days of the faith, have partaken of the communion, and been lifted up and purified by it. Third, with the exalted Head of the Church, with whom their spirits come in contact, whose life upon earth they try to continue, and to be part of the earthly body of which Christ is the soul. And fourthly, through Christ, with the infinite and eternal Father, to do whose will in the world was the one purpose of Jesus, whether in life or by death, and who ever stands at the door of the heart of every man who is born into the world, waiting for admission, asking for love and confidence, desiring co-operation in the practical life.

Thus the Christian rite of the Lord's Supper is, I do not say the necessary, but the usual means, by which the communion of saints becomes a

religious reality. Whether an individual prefers a more frequent or a rarer participation in the rite is a matter of habit and temperament. There is nothing magical in its operation. Its place is even taken in a great degree among certain Christian bodies by other rites. Every truly spiritual road leads to God. But the Eucharist does, and has all through Christian history, been the road most frequently trodden, sometimes in a superstitious and materialist spirit, sometimes in a mood of lofty aspiration. It is not for man to judge in such matters, but for God who sees the heart.

If the view set forth in our first chapters be accepted, there is a sense in which the doctrine of the Communion of Saints may be accepted without doing violence either to the principles of scientific history or to the facts of experience. If an individual life be regarded as like a gulf of the sea, connected with the vast ocean, and through that ocean with every other gulf and bay in the world, we have an interesting analogy. The gulfs may be of any size, small or great, and they may be connected one with the other in all sorts of relations. But all alike, as parts of the ocean, they follow the attractive power of sun and moon, rising and falling at intervals ; and for their very being they depend upon the connection with the water system of the globe. Yet each gulf has a character of its own, which it

retains although the water in it, the fish and the sea-plants, may be constantly changing. So the lives of individuals are an embodiment under the forms of space, time, and matter of some branch or aspect of the spiritual world. The Church consists of myriads of individual lives; past and present, if we consider them in relation to time and history, but representing and reflecting realities which are above time and space. As these realities were more completely embodied in individuals, so they may be less completely embodied in those who love and admire such individuals. In extreme cases, individuals may become almost reincarnations of departed saints and heroes, and live their lives over again amid fresh surroundings; but far more often it is only in particular phases or aspects of the new lives that the lives which have gone before are reflected. Sometimes it is a continuous influence of personality bequeathed by great saints and coming down through a succession of followers; sometimes it is a revived influence coming from the thoughts and enthusiasms which they have committed to literature; sometimes the influence may flow in other and sub-conscious ways.

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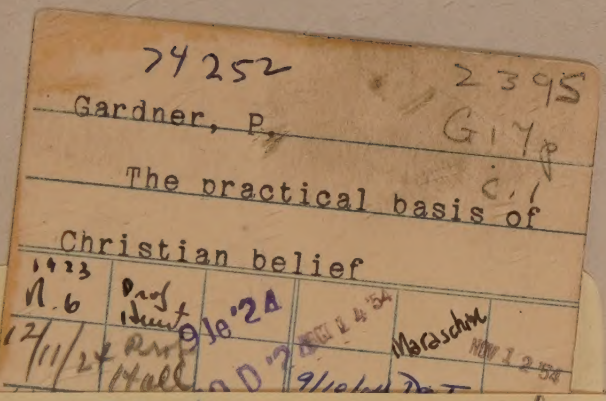

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